

BEYOND THE GRAVE.

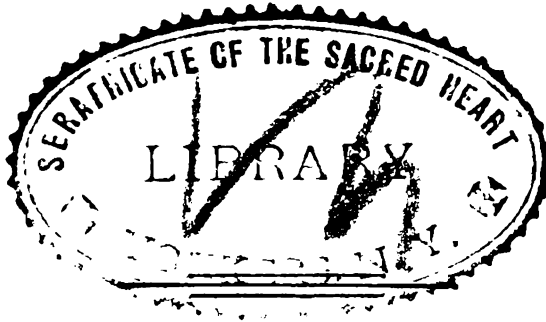
FROM THE FRENCH

OF

REV. E. HAMON, S. J.,

BY

ANNA T. SADLIER.



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† JOHN JOSEPH KAIN,

• Archbishop of St. Louis.

January 3, 1898.

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BEYOND THE GRAVE.

PART I.

THE RESURRECTION AND THE RISEN.

CHAPTER I.

Death and Resurrection.

When after a more or less prolonged struggle, death has invaded every portion of the human frame, reaching at length the heart which it strikes, its victory seems complete, decisive, irrevocable.

Taking from it the life which it has conquered, it leaves upon earth only a corpse, disfigured by the last suffering, and already sealed with the mysterious seal which dooms it to the corruption of the grave.

Soon the corpse shall be resolved into its various component elements; soon that which was a man shall be only a small handful of white dust, such as a child might hold in the hollow of its hand.

All seems indeed over. All has perished. This is what our senses tell us. But faith speaks a very different language. In presence of this victory of death, she pronounces words of hope and of resurrection; beneath these ruins life still exists. One day this matter, which is about falling into dissolution, shall once more become muscles, nerves, living flesh,—in fine, a man, full of vigor, resplendent with beauty. He shall be laid to rest in the grave for a time; but one day he shall come forth from the sepulchre and take up a life which shall endure eternally.

“That body which is sown in corruption shall rise in incorruption.”

“It is sown in dishonor; it shall rise in glory.”

“It is sown in weakness; it shall rise in power.”

“It is sown a natural body; it shall rise a spiritual body.” (I. Cor. xv, 42-44.)

Yes, “This corruptible must put on incorruption; and this mortal must put on immortality.” Death must be swallowed up in victory, so that in confronting his vanquished enemy man may cry out in triumph: “O grave, where is thy victory? O Death, where is thy sting?” (I. Cor. xv, 53, 54.)

Even in the midst of the funeral mourning the Church makes solemn affirmation of faith and hope. In presence of the grave, which

appears to be supreme humiliation and irremediable ruin for man, she utters her song of triumph and hails by anticipation the glory of the resurrection.

A Christian Funeral.

The Christian ends his journey in the self-same place where he began it. He was brought thither a tiny infant; but by baptism he has become a child of God, a future inheritor of His beautiful Heaven. In death his last visit shall be, again, to Mother Church. He comes thither to ask her to plead his cause with the Sovereign Judge, and by her intercession to open to him the gate of the heavenly country. Most touching indeed is this drama of the Christian funeral. The Church shows herself at once a mother full of tenderness, who weeps with her afflicted children; a powerful mediatrix, who raises a suppliant voice to God; a consoler, who alone possesses the secret of alleviating sorrow and confirming hope.

The Remains in the Church.

Behold the remains then in the church, at the foot of the sanctuary, surrounded by weeping relatives and friends. The man has acquitted himself of his task and has appeared before God to offer Him his works.

On his forehead he bears the seal of Holy Baptism, on his breast the Cross of his Savior, in his hands his life's harvest. A prudent and faithful servant, he has amassed treasures which death cannot take from him, now that all the rest has vanished and perished.

But side by side with his good works, which merit a reward, there are, alas! others, which weigh heavily upon the conscience of a Christian appearing before his Judge. He has wept over his faults, it is true, and has striven to efface them by repentance, but the time has come when he has need of a great pardon, of a supreme mercy.

The church prays for her repentant son.

“O God, whose property is always to have mercy and to spare, we humbly beseech Thee for the soul of Thy servant, N, which Thou hast this day commanded to depart out of this world; that Thou deliver it not into the hands of the enemy, nor forget it unto the end; but command it to be received by the holy angels and conducted into Paradise, our true country; that as it trusted and believed in Thee, it may not suffer the pains of hell, but attain unto everlasting joys. Through Jesus Christ, Our Saviour.”

Then she shows the departed at the feet of his Judge, to whom she addresses her suppliant petitions, to obtain a favourable sentence.

“Dies Irae.”

The Book of Life is open ; all the works of the man, good or evil, are exposed to the gaze of the Sovereign Judge. The guilty one implores His pardon.

“King of dreadful majesty,
Who dost freely justify;
Fount of pity, save Thou me.

Recollect, O Love Divine,
'Twas for this lost sheep of Thine,
Thou, Thy glory did'st Resign.

Satest wearied seeking me,
Suffered'st upon the Tree,
Let not vain Thy labour be.

Lo ! Thy gracious face I seek,
Shame and grief are on my cheek,
Sighs and tears my sorrow speak.

Thou did'st Mary's guilt forgive,
Did'st the dying thief receive;
Hence doth hope within me live.

Worthless are my prayers I know;
Yet, Oh, cause me not to go
Into everlasting woe.

Severed from the guilty band,
Make me with Thy sheep to stand,
Placing me on Thy right hand.

When the cursed in anguish flee
Into flames of misery,
With the blest then call Thou me.”

And the Church joining her prayers with those of her son, sends up to Jesus a final supplication ; it is the cry of a mother, who would at any price save her child.

“O Merciful Jesus, Lord Jesus, grant to this man eternal rest, Amen.”

The Epistle of the Mass for the Dead.

After having given help to the dead, the Church turns her attention to the living. They are gathered around the coffin, shedding bitter tears, overwhelmed with the deepest grief. To console these hearts wrung by a cruel separation, she employs the words of Saint Paul, the apostle of the Resurrection.

“Brethren, we will not have you ignorant concerning them that are asleep, that you be not sorrowful even as others who have no hope. . . . For this we say unto you in the word of the Lord. . . . For the Lord Himself shall come down from heaven with commandment, and with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead who are in Christ shall rise first Wherefore, comfort ye one another with these words. (I. Thess. IV, 1, 12.) -

The apostle then solemnly announces the future resurrection of the dead there lying upon the bier. In the name of the Lord he promises parents and friends that there shall be a reunion in a common country, where they shall continue to love one another as they have loved upon earth. The separation shall be for a few years only, and afterward the joy, the felicity, which shall be eternal.

The Gospel.

But now it is Jesus Himself who comes to console the afflicted family, as of old, he consoled Martha and Mary on the death of their brother, Lazarus. (John XI.)

The same touching dialogue takes place between the Saviour and His earthly children :

“Lord if Thou hadst been here, if Thou hadst willed it, my beloved father, mother, or child, had not died.”

And Jesus answers :

“I am the resurrection and the life ; he that believeth in me, although he be dead, shall live, and everyone that liveth and believeth in me shall not die forever.”

Be comforted then afflicted family. On the day of the resurrection you shall see him living, whom today you mourn as dead ; you shall find him never more to lose him. He, who is the Master of life and death, has himself given you this assurance. Oh, how consoling are these promises ; how they alleviate the pain of separation. The veil is withdrawn, the mysteries of the grave laid bare ; beyond the sorrow of the present the Christian beholds the joy and the glory of the future.

We weep for the death of friends or kindred because cherished affections are inter-

rupted by death. We are afflicted because we no longer hear the voice which encouraged and consoled ; because we rejoice no more in the sweet company of those who were our joy and happiness, our tears flow and our hearts are full of sadness.

It is certain that neither these tears nor this sadness have been condemned by Jesus, He, who of old, wept for the death of Lazarus, His friend ; who was moved to compassion by the sight of the evils caused by death to the hapless sons of Adam. But He did not will that we should abandon ourselves to grief, "even as others who have no hope." He spoke to us of future joys, and reminded us of present consolations.

What We Know by Faith.

We know by faith that it is only the body, the visible presence of the departed members of our family, that is gone ; their souls remain for ever in communion with ours. They live in the true country, preserve our memory, pray for us, and retain their love and solicitude for us. Our earthly parents, who have become saints in heaven, are constantly asking of God that He bring us one day to the great meeting place of our true country.

The assurance of this beneficent influence surrounding us and keeping alive beyond the grave, the old time bond of affection is con-

soling to our hearts, whilst the infallible promise of future reunion, causes us to accept with resignation, the temporary separation.

Song of Triumph.

The sacrifice is ended; the time has come for the final farewell. The Church for the last time recommends her son to God; she begs Him to deliver the soul from the snares of the enemy and to receive it into the place of eternal repose; then she sprinkles the dead with sanctifying water, she envelopes him in the sacred cloud of incense, the symbol of immortality, and a silent homage to the life, the germ whereof remains beneath these ruins. The Church treats this body, which is hastening to destruction, as a holy thing, worthy of being consecrated to God.

She does this because the secrets of death are known to her. She is aware that Baptism and the Eucharist have placed in this matter, which is mortal, the germ of indestructible life. She remembers the words of the Lord, "He who eats My flesh shall have life everlasting." One day, at the sound of the angel's voice, the life which sleeps shall awake, man shall come forth from the grave in his full strength; following the example of his Divine Chief he shall triumph over death. Christ is risen and we also shall arise.

Suddenly the Church sends forth a strange

chant, which certainly seems but little in harmony with the funeral pomp of the surroundings. She intones a hymn of triumph. She opens to the eyes of the weeping relatives and friends the gates of the heavenly city ; she shows them the happy fate of those who die in the Lord, once their souls are purified by the pains due to sin. The saints of heaven advance to meet the newly elect. The angels and archangels follow him in procession to the very throne of the Most High ; Jesus receives this man as a father receives a beloved child, and puts him into possession of heavenly beatitude. Sorrow is for those who remain upon earth, but for him who dies in the peace of the Lord, joy and bliss. And with this heavenly vision, Holy Church takes leave of her son, who is soon to enter into eternal peace.

CHAPTER II.

The Dogma of the Resurrection.

The survival of the soul at the death of the body, the promise of beatitude given by God as a reward for the good works accomplished during life ; these are the great truths which form the very basis of religion.

For the Christian all does not end with death ; on the contrary everything begins. He, then, enters upon a new kind of exist-

ence, which shall be no longer subject to the changes of age and the conditions existing here below, but which shall remain immutable and permanent. If the man has been faithful to the law of God, he shall receive a blessed life, exempt from all evils, rich in every good, with the assurance of enjoying it eternally. This is the hope of the Christian.

God left this supreme consolation to our first parents, exhorting them to repair their faults and bear patiently the evils of the present life, keeping in mind the joys of the future. He promised them a Redeemer, the conquerer of death and hell, who should one day restore to the human race the privileges it had lost; supernatural life, intimate union with God, and immortality of happiness.

Adam and Eve faithfully transmitted to their descendants so consoling a revelation. Generation after generation the patriarchs of old, at the end of their long career, finding themselves face to face with death, and about to be gathered to their fathers, loudly declared their belief in the survival of the soul. They were but answering the summons of the God of their ancestors, of Abraham, of Isaac, of Jacob. Now that God, as Jesus later declared, is not the God of the dead, but of the living: For all lived in him (Luke xx, 38.). Having paid their debt to death the patriarchs entered into that new life, await-

ing the coming of the Redeemer, who was to introduce them into the splendour of the heavenly country.

Destiny of the Body.

But if the soul possessed the assurance of an immortal life, what fate was reserved for the body of man. Was it to remain forever the prey of death? Was the grave to speak the final word in human destiny? It must be admitted that the aspirations of our nature demand more than this, and the light of our intelligence proves that these aspirations are reasonable.

The body as well as the soul underwent pain and suffering; why should it not, then, like the soul, enjoy the reward? The integrity of human nature, which supposes the body united to the soul, the perfection of its operations, requires this union. Would not the happiness of the just be more complete if it were enjoyed not alone by the soul, but also by the body? Why then should not the body take on a new life, and what obstacle exists to its so doing?

If the almighty power of God could once draw a human body from the slime of the earth, it can also renew that life from the dust of the grave and give it, by privilege, an immortality, which the soul possesses by its nature. (x. Suarez, t 4 p. 136.)

God has deigned to reply to our natural aspirations and to the anxious questionings of our intelligence. He has made known to us the glorious destiny preserved one day for the human body; this revelation, it is true, was long shrouded in obscurity, but gradually, through the ages, it grew in clearness as the light of the dawn, until the days when Jesus finally showed it forth in its full splendour.

The patriarch of Idumea, the holy man Job, proclaimed in tones thrilling as a trumpet call in battle, his faith in the future resurrection of the body. "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and in the last day I shall rise out of the earth."

"And I shall be clothed again with my skin and in my flesh I shall see God.

"Whom I myself shall see and my eyes shall behold, and not another, and this my hope is laid up in my bosom." (Job XIX, 25.)

Centuries later, in a magnificent allegory, the prophet Ezekiel predicted the rising again of the house of Israel, then humiliated and dried up as the bones of sepulchres, announcing, at the same time, the future resurrection of the human race.

"The hand of the Lord was upon me and brought me forth in the spirit of the Lord: and set me down in the midst of a plain, that was full of bones.

“And he led me forth about through them on every side . . . now they were exceedingly dry,

“And he said to me . . . Son of man dost thou think these bones shall live. And I said: O Lord God, Thou knowest.

“And he said to me: Prophecy concerning these bones and say to them, Ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord.

“Thus saith the Lord God to these bones, Behold I will send Spirit into you and you shall live.

“And I will lay sinews upon you, and will cause flesh to grow over you, and will cover you with skin; and I will give you spirit, and you shall live and you shall know that I am the Lord.

“And I prophesied as he had commanded me: and as I prophesied there was a noise, and behold a commotion; and the bones came together, each one to its joint.

“And I saw and beheld the sinews and the flesh come upon them: and the skin was stretched out over them . . . and the spirit came into them, and they lived: and they stood upon their feet, an exceeding great army.” (Ezekiel, xxxvii.)

This tradition of the future resurrection of the body was perpetuated from age to age in the heart of the Jewish nation.

On the eve of the appearance of Jesus

upon earth, the valiant Maccabees, in the midst of the torments they were enduring for the faith, confidently proclaimed their belief in the future resurrection. They boldly summoned their murderers to appear at the tribunal of the Sovereign Judge.

“Thou, indeed, O most wicked man, destroyest us out of this present life: but the king of the world will raise us up who die for his laws, in the resurrection of eternal life.

“But stay patiently awhile, and thou shalt see his great power and in what manner he will torment thee and thy seed.”

Jesus and the Resurrection.

But it was reserved for the Saviour himself to throw full light upon the dogma of the resurrection of man. At the time when Jesus was preaching in Judea a great division was in progress amongst the Jews, with regard to this great question. Whilst the Pharisees firmly upheld the national belief, the Sadducees, who formed a numerous and influential sect, denied the resurrection of the dead and even the survival of the soul. Both parties necessarily referred the point in dispute to the prophet, the person upon whom the gaze of all Israel was then fixed. This is what they did:

A deputation of Sadducees waited upon Jesus and proposed to him the following difficulty:—

“Master, Moses wrote unto us: If any man’s brother die leaving a wife, and he leave no children, that his brother should take her to wife, and raise up issue for his brother.

“There were therefore seven brethren: and the first took her to wife, and died without children.

“And the next took her to wife and he also died childless.

“And the third took her. And in like manner all the seven, and they left no children and died.

“Last of all the woman died also.

“In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife of them shall she be?

“For all the seven had her.

“And Jesus said to them: The children of this world marry and are given in marriage.

“But they that shall be accounted worthy of that world and of the resurrection of the dead shall neither be married nor take wives.

“Neither can they die any more for they are equal to the Angels and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.”

After having resolved this difficulty, Jesus officially pronounced upon the great question of the resurrection of the dead, which was the ground of the debate.

“Now that the dead rise again, Moses also showed at the bush, when he called the Lord:

The God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.

“For he is not the God of the dead, but of the living: for all live in him.”

Jesus also confirmed by his divine authority at once the belief in the resurrection of the dead, which had its origin at the very cradle of the race. The Sadducees were confounded, and some Scribes, hearing this precise and luminous response, could not restrain their enthusiasm:

“Master,” said they, “Thou hast said well.” (Luke xx, 28. . .)

Besides Jesus made this truth the very basis of his teaching, and the supreme reason which should induce men to accept his doctrine.

“He who eats my flesh, I will raise him up at the last day.”

Yes, there will be a resurrection and a future life. God will reward the good and punish the wicked. Conform your lives then to the will of that God whom I am making known to you. One day you shall render an account of all your actions, and shall enjoy a happy or unhappy eternity according to your works.

Such were the truths which he constantly repeated in his preaching, to console the poor, the afflicted, and all who were suffering in body or soul.

One day the kingdom of His Father, the kingdom of joy and glory, should be their eternal reward. This was also the great means which he employed to convert sinners, making the fear of the judgments of God penetrate into their souls. Their crimes should not remain unpunished nor their obstinacy in evil, unavenged. One day, if they did not reform their lives, they would be condemned by the living God and thrown body and soul into the fires of the eternal abyss. There is no truth in all the Gospels upon which Jesus has more frequently insisted, nor of which he has given more numerous and exact details.

It is no longer a seer, who, through the mists of futurity, dimly perceives the great outline of the Divine plan. It is a spectator who has before him the various movements of the drama, and the decrees as they are unfolded follow one another in their striking reality. He announces the end of the world and the disturbances which shall take place in heaven and on earth. He shows the Son of man, coming in the clouds of heaven, with great pomp and awful majesty. He tells of the resurrection of the dead, at the voice of the angel, at the sound of the trumpet. He pictures the sublime scene of the last Judgment, which shall be the triumph of the justice of God and the glorification of His elect. Finally He makes known by anticipa-

tion the sentence of the Judge who shall send the damned to hell and call the blessed to an eternal reward. (1. Matt. xxv, 21.)

Resurrection of the Saviour.

Jesus evidently desired that these truths should penetrate the head and heart of man, in such a way that doubt should be thenceforth impossible, and that they should become the great light to guide his steps through life. He did more. Fearing that simple affirmation, no matter how often repeated, might not suffice to meet the objections presented by the senses and the passions, He desired to give in His own person an irrefutable proof of the future resurrection and the glory reserved for man, the conqueror of death. By His own power, Jesus came forth living from the tomb. For forty days He displayed to the apostles, as well as to numerous disciples, the glorious privileges of his risen body. Its impassibility, which put it beyond the power of suffering; its agility, by which, in a moment, it was transported considerable distances; its perfect subjection to the soul, and its clearness, altogether heavenly. During these forty days he ceased not to discourse to them of the kingdom of his Father, of its beauty and its joys; of the blissful life, which they should enjoy with him in heaven. Doubt was no longer possible,

and the least credulous of the apostles was, at length, obliged to yield to the evidences of the fact, that the Saviour had really fulfilled his promises. He had risen from the dead, a marvelous transformation had been wrought in Him ; it would also one day take place in them.

He had assured them that the soldiers should once again be united to their leader, the children should be reunited to their Father, when the touching wish of the Last Supper would become a reality: "Father, I will that where I am, they also whom thou hast given me may be with me." (John XVIII, 24.)

And, full of enthusiasm, the apostles began to preach to the Jews and the heathen nations the great dogma of the resurrection of the dead, the eternal reward or punishment, which should be given to man, according to his works. It was these truths which converted the world, and it is also these, which, amid the trials and difficulties of life, sustain our courage and keep us faithful to the laws of God. Every Christian repeats with certainty the words of the holy man, Job: "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and I shall rise out of the earth. I shall see my God, whom I myself shall see and not another . . . My eyes shall see Him . . . This, my hope, is laid up in my bosom."

The fundamental dogma of the resurrection of the dead is laid down in these principal outlines. It finds a support in the natural desire of man to survive death, and to see his soul one day reunited to his body, that together they may enjoy a mutual felicity. The prophets announced it, leaving its universality still in the shadow; but the words of Jesus, and the example of his resurrection, could alone give us an absolute and inalterable certainty.

Since that time death has had no secrets from us. We know what is beyond the tomb, and we possess the final key to human destiny. Christ has risen and we, too, shall arise one day; He is happy in heaven, and we shall be happy with him, provided we follow the path he has traced out for us, and which must inevitably lead us from earth into heaven. A promise such as this puts courage and confidence into the heart of every Christian. It offers consolation to those who suffer patiently, who struggle bravely and perseveringly till they finally reach the heaven of everlasting rest.

As, despite winds and waves, the intrepid mariner unceasingly steers his barque in the direction of his country, so the Christian, keeping heart and eyes turned ever heavenward, hastens on to the reward which shall compensate him for all his efforts. If ever

and anon storms arise to divert him from his course, nothing is better calculated to bring him back to the right path, than the thought of the resurrection and the future life. I am responsible for the actions of my life. I shall have to bring them one day to the tribunal of my God, and I shall receive from him reward or punishment according to my works. Can I then, with an easy conscience, sacrifice an eternity of happiness for gratifications which are perishable, and too often altogether illusory? Shall I have the miserable courage to brave my God to the end, and by my obstinacy in evil to confront an eternity of woe? No, No; I will amend my life. By an humble avowal of my sins, I shall regain my right to heaven, and the hope of a happiness which shall be limitless and everlasting.

CHAPTER III.

The Last Day of the World.

Our world shall not always remain what it is at present. When it has fulfilled its providentially appointed mission fire shall be sent to revivify and purify it, so as to render it conformable to the new destiny reserved for it. Such were the traditions perpetuated by the Jews from the first ages of the world.

“Howl ye,” says the prophet Isaias, “for the day of the Lord shall come, a cruel day and full of indignation, and of wrath and fury, to lay the land desolate, and to destroy the sinners thereof out of it.

“For the stars of heaven and their brightness shall not display their light; the sun shall be darkened in its rising, and the moon shall not shine with her light . . . I will trouble the heavens, and the earth shall be moved out of her place, for the indignation of the Lord of hosts.” (Isaias XIII, 6.)

Later the prophets Ezekiel, Amos, and Joel employ similar language. (Ezek. xxxii, 7), (Amos viii, 9), (Joel ii, 10.) Although these predictions are directly addressed to cities or countries, which the Lord intended to destroy, still the commentators of Holy Writ apply them equally to the signs and prodigies which shall precede the end of the world. (Corn. a Lap.) Finally, the solemn testimony of Jesus comes to confirm these interpretations of ancient prophecies.

Jesus and the End of the World.

On the eve of his passion, Jesus, having quitted the Temple, began to climb the Mount of Olives to return to Bethania. The ascent was steep. All at once, as though exhausted by fatigue, after so long a journey, he stopped, and turning, cast a long look of

sadness on that city, which, despite so many miracles, had persisted in its unbelief.

It was the moment when the setting sun shed only a faint light on the walls of the holy city. The Temple, like some great vessel anchored in a port, showed through the twilight its harmonious and majestic outlines. Jesus silently regarded with a look of deep compassion these places, which of all the earth, were particularly dear to him.

“Master,” said one of his disciples, “behold what manner of stones and what buildings are here.” But Jesus, his heart full of pity, answered:

“Amen, I say to you, there shall not be left a stone upon a stone, that shall not be thrown down.” (Le Camus, *Life of Our Lord*, vol. 2, p 34.)

Taking advantage of the approaching fall of Jerusalem, Jesus spoke to his disciples of the end of time, and of the catastrophe which should bring about the total ruin of our universe. This catastrophe shall be neither unforeseen nor instantaneous. Fearful phenomena, calculated to strike terror into the bravest hearts, shall announce the impending destruction of our globe.

If the passages scattered through the Scriptures are collected, it will be seen that that there shall be strange signs in the stars, which form a part of the terrestrial system.

The sun shall be darkened, the moon shall refuse its light, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, thunderbolts, incendiary meteors to burn the whole surface of the earth, shall signalize the last day of our planet, and the coming of the Lord. The tradition that the world is destined to perish by fire was perpetuated among Christians: St. Peter taught it to the faithful of his time:

“The final day of the Lord shall come as a thief, in which the heavens shall pass away with great violence, and the elements shall be melted with heat, and the works which are in it shall be burnt up.” (II. Peter, III, 10.)

“The heavens and the earth, which are now by the same word kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment.” (II. Epist. Peter, III, 7.)

All the fathers and doctors of the Church have entertained the same idea.

“The beauty of this world shall perish in a universal conflagration,” says St. Augustine, “as the waters of the globe spreading over the earth caused the deluge, so the figure of this world shall perish by the kindling of her hidden fires.” (City of God, Book 22, ch. 16.)

Modern Science and the Conflagration of the World.

What does modern science hold with relation to the conflagration of the world, as foretold by the Scriptures? A competent au-

thority has thus summarized the opinions of the learned on this point:

“Revelation proclaims,” says he, “the end of the world by the conflagration of the earth, the confusion of the powers of the heavens and the fall of stars, at a date which is known to God alone. These obscure utterances, as with all prophecies previous to their fulfillment, are capable of many interpretations. In former times, many Catholic commentators, refused to take literally the fall of stars, because science taught that they were fixed. But scientific hypotheses are now changing, and some are laid down which appear sufficiently probable.

“They give, firstly, examples of temporary conflagrations in the stars, called occasional. Do these hitherto opaque bodies ignite, after some explosion of internal gases, which have caught fire at the surface? Or, according to the mechanical theory of heat, are they brought to this luminous incandescence by a violent collision with other opaque bodies?

“Thus cannon balls fired at a blinded vessel by heating the blinds, which they cannot pierce, to a red heat, cause ignition. Moreover, these two causes might combine to give this temporary illumination to the occasional stars.

“Is it then so extraordinary to believe that the earth might be exposed to this kind of

combustion? God, who directs at his will the course of the stars, can also change it at his will, and has only to give an impetus to one or more of these heavenly bodies, in order to hurl them against our globe.

“Under the tremendous pressure brought to bear upon the earth’s crust by the shock, volcanoes, or interior reservoirs of gas, petroleum, and other inflammable substances, might suddenly burst in great numbers, and add their fires to those already kindled by the collision. In all this there would certainly be sufficient to consume by fire everything upon the earth. Quite recently we were astonished to see a comet of our planetary system thrown completely out of its path, brushing lightly and rapidly against the satellites of Jupiter without disturbing their course. Had it been thrown against the earth it would have spread death and destruction everywhere. Apart from the shock occasioned by its nucleus, the flames from its long, undulating, and blazing tail would soon have surrounded and licked up our whole globe.

“Why then, since this has happened to many occasional stars, and to the satellites of Jupiter, might it not happen to us, and, as in those cases, without possible prevision, or at least without the possibility of making any exact and precise calculation as to the day

and hour of the occurrence? Therefore, even in the natural order, the collision of the earth with some wandering star is not improbable. Our earth is a satellite of Solus in his course through the stellar world. He might very easily attract, as did Jupiter, some comet which is at present unknown to the solar system, and dash it against us."

Without pausing to prove this at length, from scientific sources, I shall conclude with a single testimony that God, in producing a fall of stars and a terrestrial conflagration, will simply be doing that of which we have already had numerous examples and precedents in nature.

We, who are able to control and direct the forces of nature, should be stronger than God, were it impossible for Him to interfere in His own work, for ends worthy of Him. It would be denying Him liberty and intelligence . . . Now, surely, it will be an end worthy of Him to put a term to the trials of His intelligent creatures by deciding upon the day of judgment, when His honor, so long outraged, shall be avenged, with that of his elect so often persecuted. It will be only necessary to give an impetus to some star or to the earth. Is this too divine a preparation for the altogether divine act of the resurrection of the dead?

In 1882, M. Meric, reported as authentic,

the hypothesis of M. Ferrier (*Annales Catholiques*, Nov. 15, 1879), as to a rain or hail of asteroids, obscuring the sun and moon and falling on the earth. (*Autre Vie*, ii, pp. 98 to 100.)

And to cite only one reliable commentator, Knabenbauer, in his commentaries on Isaias, St. Matthew, and others, commends this explanation, of which he notes the development by Epping. According to him the confusion of the powers of the heavens shall be, by a Hebraism very common in Scripture, the confusion of the army of heaven, and an impetus given by God to the heavenly bodies and meteors. (St. Matthew XXIV, 27.)

Touching Mercy of God.

This final ruin shall be neither unforeseen nor instantaneous. Strange phenomena, calculated to strike terror into the bravest hearts, shall precede and announce to men the approaching dissolution of our old universe.

Why these prodigies?

Shall they exercise a providential mission toward the men who shall be then living upon the earth? St. Thomas answers these questions in an admirable manner:

“Christ,” says he, “when he comes to judgment, shall show himself under a glorious form; because of the authority which is

due to God. Now it belongs to the judicial power to be accompanied by certain insignia, which shall inspire respect and submission. That is why many signs shall precede the coming of Christ in His advent as a judge."

The holy doctor sees in these signs a touching proof of the love of God, who, after having loved man from the beginning, shall give him a last token of love at the very moment when the final catastrophe is imminent. According to St. Thomas it shall be the mission of these strange, terrible, awe-inspiring phenomena to lead the hearts of men at last to submit to the Judge, who is coming, and to prepare for the judgment, by sending in advance these premonitory signs. (Supp. Quest. 73, a, i in corp.)

Admirable bounty of our God! Touching proof of His desire to save men! At the very moment when Jesus is preparing to display His mightiest power in the eyes of the universe, He makes one last effort to snatch souls from eternal damnation, which is impending. He would convert by terror those wills which have been hitherto rebellious to the inspirations of His Grace. In the very hour, when He is about to triumph over His enemies and crush them by His power, He opens once more to men the infinite treasures of His mercy.

Doubtless, it will happen, as at the time of the deluge, that innumerable men, who have resisted the continual appeals of divine goodness, will yield to the threatenings of His anger. Fear shall accomplish what love was unable to do. Stunned, overcome with terror at sight of the fearful phenomena confronting them on all sides, they shall seek a supreme refuge in mercy. The repentance of the last hour will save them.

When the last day of the world shall have arrived, when its last hour shall have sounded, the Lord shall then show forth His power, and Himself destroy what He Himself created. Urged by an invisible force the oceans shall break their bounds and overflow their banks. The various forces which keep the stellar worlds in their respective places, being no longer controlled by their heavenly directors, shall engage in a herculean contest in space, and this contest shall shortly produce gigantic ruins. Shaken at their base, the mountains shall sway as an intoxicated man, and shall be hurled into the depths of the valleys, which shall be filled up with their fragments. The monuments of men, their gorgeous palaces, magnificent cities, all the evidences of the industry of the sons of Adam, shall crumble away on every side, burying in their ruins those who were the masters of the earth, the proud possessors of its immense

wealth. Then the bowels of the globe shall belch forth active and devouring flames, now held in check by the hand of the Lord. The whole universe shall be only a glowing furnace, wherein all shall be tried by fire, and all shall perish. Such is the story of the last day of the world. Through the centuries men have told it with affright, and they shall tell it until that day, known to God alone, when creation shall pass through this supreme ordeal, and be thus prepared for a new and glorious destiny.

CHAPTER IV.

The Triumph of Life.

When the fires of the last day shall have accomplished their work of destruction, the world shall be but one vast grave, above which death alone shall remain erect, to celebrate His victory. But this victory shall be neither decisive nor of long duration. Life shall soon spring forth anew from amid that universal ruin ; a glorious, and immortal life, exempt from all evil, rich in all good, the sublime creation of the Son of God and of His eternal glory.

The trumpet of the angel shall sound by command of the Word ; His voice shall be

heard. It will command the dead to take on life, and to come forth from the grave.

“Arise ye dead and come to judgment.

“And the dead obeyed these orders.

“And the sepulchres were opened.

“And the earth gave up its victims, and the sea gave up the dead that were in it.”

(Apoc. xx, 13.)

The entire human race shall live with a life which knows not death. The prophecy of Ezekiel shall become a reality.

“And as I prophesied there was a noise, and behold a commotion, and the bones went together, each one to its joint.

“I saw, and behold the sinews and the flesh came upon them; and the skin was stretched out over them; . . . and the spirit came into them, and they lived, and they stood up upon their feet an exceedingly great army.” (Ezekiel, xxxvii.)

“This resurrection,” says St. Paul, “shall be accomplished in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. And the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall rise, again, incorruptible.” (I. Cor. xv, 51.)

“Then shall come to pass the saying that is written: Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy victory! O death, where is thy sting!” (I. Cor. xv.)

In the immense multitude of the risen, saints and the damned shall be for the mo-

ment confounded, one with the other, but already there exists an amazing difference between them.

“Behold, I tell you a mystery ; we shall all, indeed, rise again, but we shall not all be changed.” (I. Cor. xv. 51.)

Which means that: The soul on resuming possession of its body shall be remodelled after its own image and likeness. But the sins committed by the damned during life, have imprinted on their souls innumerable wounds, which neither repentance nor the grace of God have effaced during the time of mercy. The work of the devil has, therefore, continued to exist in all its ugliness. Now this soul, forced to resume its body, fatally communicates to it the horrible deformity by which it is itself disfigured. The terrible punishment has begun, even before the sentence of the Judge; the book of life is already opened to the eyes of all. Everyone may read there, everyone may see in the hideous bodies of the damned the sins and offenses by which they formerly sullied their souls.

These miserable beings, confounded, shall behold their most secret faults exposed thus to the gaze of the universe, the forerunner of a still greater confusion, at the approaching judgment; they shall vainly invoke annihilation to escape such ignominy.

“Then shall they begin to say to the mountains: Fall upon us, and to the hills, cover us.” (Luke, XXIII, 30.)

“And in those days men shall seek death, and they shall not find it; and they shall desire to die, and death shall fly from them.” (Apoc. ix, 6.)

Thus shall be explained certain sayings in the Scriptures, which at first sight seem somewhat obscure. “The damned,” says Daniel, “shall awake unto reproach.” (xii. 2.)

“They that have done evil unto the resurrection of judgment.” (John, v, 28.)

Their features shall bear traces so horrible of all that is most repulsive in a corpse, that St. John does not hesitate to call their resurrection an actual death,—“The second death.” It will give them, in truth, a life a thousand times more horrible than death. (Apoc. xx, 14.) In the same sense the prophets have said: “Let not the dead live, . . . nor rise again.” (Is. xxvi, 14.) In reality they shall rise again, but shall have no share in the marvelous change, which shall then be wrought in the saints.

The Resurrection of the Saints.

In fact, the souls of the saints, enriched by merits and glory, shall communicate to their risen bodies an altogether heavenly radiance and beauty. The blood of Christ and the

tears of repentance shall efface the faults which human weakness caused them formerly to commit. Of these but the scar and memory shall remain, with nothing which can henceforth cause the slightest shame or sorrow. "The saints," says St. Thomas, "shall have no more sorrow for their sins, but shall rather rejoice at the mercy which has pardoned them." (Supp. 9, 87 a 1.)

According to Bossuet the faults of repentant sinners shall be covered with divine mercy, and with their own penitent lives as a mantle of glory. The more numerous the faults of their lives, the deeper their misery, the more lively shall be their gratitude to God, who snatched them from the abyss of iniquity to number them amongst the blessed.

Thus shall each one prepare for the day of the resurrection by a body resplendent with glory, or repulsive with ugliness, according to his works. Each shall prepare for himself great joy, or great confusion, either by effacing the stains on his soul by penance, or by persisting in retaining, at any cost, the hideous wounds of sin. Each one, in fine, chooses at his will a place amongst the saints, or amongst the damned.

At the judgment day God will, so to say, simply ratify the choice of man. He will reward the fidelity of the good according to His promises, but at the same time He shall in-

flict upon the wicked the chastisement with which He threatened them. Voluntarily, until their death, these men chose to remain amongst the accursed of God. At the judgment God will ratify their fatal choice, and condemn them to the torment which they have merited and accepted. That the words of the Scripture shall be fulfilled,—

“Destruction is thy own, O Israel!”
(Osee, XIII, 9.)

Judgment and Sentence.

All is ready for the judgment.

“And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven and the tribes of the earth shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with much power and majesty.” (Matt. XXIV, 30.) The angel choirs shall form His escort: the whole heavenly world shall accompany Him. But heaven will not be the only witness of the final victory of the Lion of Judah: hell with its sad inhabitants must also be present at the triumph. Hell, which has through the ages despised Jesus in His humility, bitterly contested His work, and shown itself His irreconcilable enemy. Now, that the Saviour is about to manifest His power and to render to every one according to his works, it is proper that the demon and his satellites should assist at the triumph of justice and behold the glory of the victims

whom they once so furiously persecuted. The voice of the Master shall open the gates of the abyss. It will compel the rebel angels to quit their dark abode and to come, cowering with terror, to range themselves at the feet of their Judge.

The entire creation, angels and men, saints and the damned, shall find themselves reunited around their sovereign Lord and Master. In the deepest silence, their hearts full of respect or of terror, the immense multitude of men shall surround the throne whereon the Judge shall have taken His place.

And the angels of God shall proceed to the separation of the just from the wicked as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats : and shall “ set the sheep on His right hand,” that is to say, those who are called to inhabit the city of peace, “ but the goats on His left,” that is to say, those who are destined to people “ the city of evil and of eternal revolt.” (Matt. 2 v, 32.)

Judgment of the Elect.

And the Judge shall give sentence.

Addressing Himself to those upon His right, He shall say : “ Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world : for I was hungry and you gave Me to eat ; I was thirsty

and you gave Me to drink ; I was a stranger and you took Me in ; naked and you covered Me ; sick and you visited Me ; I was in prison and you came to Me." (Matt. xxv, 32.)

Divine charity accomplished works of mercy in the elect. The love of God inspired them with the love of their neighbour. After the example of the Saviour, their Father, they, too, had hearts full of compassion and devotedness towards their brethren. They assisted them by every means in their power. Therefore, in the great day of retribution, Jesus recognized them for His children, the family resemblance being strong in their souls. Because of their charity, He called them to the reward: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

Judgment of the Damned.

Very different, alas ! shall be the fate of those, who have lived only for themselves, their own passions, or the pleasures of the earth. These unhappy ones loved neither God nor their neighbour. Egotism killed every affection in them ; egotism, the fruit of pride and sensuality, the characteristic mark of the devil, who was proud and a murderer from the beginning. This sensual egotism covers the soul with countless stains and pride prevents its being purified in the blood of the

Saviour. They die in final impenitence, bearing in themselves the accursed mark of their disorderly lives. At the day of judgment it shall cause their eternal reprobation.

And the angry Judge shall turn towards those upon his left, saying: "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave Me not to eat; thirsty and you gave Me not to drink; I was a stranger and you took Me not in; naked and covered Me not; sick and in prison and you did not visit Me."

On hearing these words a great despairing clamor shall come forth from the hearts of the damned. The gates of the abyss shall open to swallow them up and the demons shall urge them forwards, casting, as they go, one last glance of hatred towards the all-powerful Judge who banishes them from His presence and condemns them to eternal suffering.

"And these shall go into everlasting punishment; but the just into life everlasting." (Matt. xxv, 31-46.)

The Entrance of the Elect Into Heaven.

The just shall respond to the sweet invitation of Jesus calling them to heaven, by acclamations of joy and gratitude. They shall doubtless entone the hymn of joy, which

of old saluted the birth of the Son of God upon earth and which might serve to celebrate the birth of the human race unto life eternal, in their true country: "Glory be to God in the highest heavens, on earth peace to men of good will. We praise Thee, O Lord, we bless Thee, we adore Thee, we give Thee thanks. Glory to God in the highest."

Then following their King and Father, the blessed shall rise into the air to take possession of the beautiful kingdom, which has become their country.

Here, the majestic group of the Patriarchs and Prophets of the Old Testament. The day of glory which they announced in terms so eloquent, after which they so ardently longed, has burst at last upon their eyes. The God of armies has triumphed over His enemies, the Lion of Judah has won a final victory over His foe.

Here, the Apostles. They were the first to suffer, they shall also be the first to receive the reward,—the princes of heaven, they shall surround the Divine Conqueror, and shall march at the head of the multitudes, whom they have saved by their preaching and their sufferings.

Here, the glorious army of Martyrs. The scars of the wounds, which they received for the love of the Saviour, shall be visible upon their risen bodies, as the wounds of His pas-

sion upon that of Jesus, but they shall shine as so many suns. The martyrs alone shall have the honor of carrying the palm, as the emblem of their triumph.

Here, the choir of Virgins. Clad in garments of resplendent whiteness, wearing upon their heads a crown of precious stones, and adorned with a glory superior to that of the other blessed ones, they shall form a guard of honor to Jesus. They shall follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth, and alone shall have the privilege of singing the mystical canticle of virginity.

Here, the pontiffs, the doctors, the fathers of the nations, all those giants of virtue, who have laboured with so much courage for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. These great evangelists of the nations shall advance at the head of the millions of men saved by their zeal and their labors, with the martyrs and the virgins, the doctors wearing the aureola, which shall be the insignia of their superior dignity. (Supp. Q. 96, passim.)

In fine, here the multitudes of all ages, of both sexes, of every tongue and of every tribe, who, faithful to the law of Jesus, practiced it in patience and humility.

The greater number of the saints shall once have been poor and lowly upon earth. The world despised them and regarded them as nothing. They were working men or women

of the people, very poor, indeed, in the goods of the earth, but very rich as to their souls with heavenly treasures. Behold them now, numbered amongst the children of God. The time of trial is passed, toil and suffering are no more, it is the hour of reward. They shall reap in joy what they have sown in tears.

The Divine Conqueror shall penetrate into the highest heavens, at the head of humanity, redeemed by His blood.

The choirs of angels shall salute their new brethren, who shall henceforth share in their happiness. United in a common sentiment of love and gratitude, angels and men shall chant together the canticle in honor of the Lamb of God.

“Great and wonderful are Thy works, O Lord, God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, O King of ages.

“Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and magnify Thy name? For Thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and shall adore in Thy sight, because Thy judgments are manifest.” (Apoc. xv, 34.)

The glorious life of Heaven is begun.

CHAPTER V.

Privileges of Glorified Bodies.

Before studying the life of the elect in heaven, let us observe the change which the resurrection has wrought in them and the marvelous qualities which it has communicated to the glorified bodies.

God has given the elect privileges which, without changing the very nature of man, have modified it, however, for the better; these are called impassibility, clearness, agility, and subtilty.

The Catechism of the Council of Trent lays down Catholic teaching upon this subject in the following terms.

Doctrine of the Church.

“Although the risen body must be, as to substance, the same which it has been before being destroyed by death, the faithful must understand that its conditions shall be essentially different.

“The risen bodies of the saints shall be adorned with certain glorious qualities, which shall render them much nobler than they ever were before.”

The Fathers, following the doctrine of the apostles, chiefly make mention of the four following: impassibility, clearness, agility, and subtility. We shall examine them successively.

First Quality of Glorious Bodies—Impassibility.

“The first quality of glorious bodies shall be impassibility, preventing the bodies of the saints from being subject to suffering, pain, or discomfort; neither heat nor cold, nor the violence of waters can annoy them.

“The body is sown in corruption, ‘it shall rise in incorruption’.” (Trid. Cat., Paris, I. a, part II, p. 15.)

The glorified bodies shall, then, recover the privileges of impassibility and immortality, which our first parents possessed and lost by their own fault. In the terrestrial paradise Adam and Eve knew neither the intemperance of the seasons nor sufferings of any sort; above all, they knew not death. They enjoyed perfect health which nothing could impair. Labor was simply an agreeable occupation for them, a pleasing recreation which was not marred by fatigue.

After having lived this happy life for a greater or less time, they were afterwards to enter into the heavenly country without having had to pass through death. Sin disturbed the harmony.

By destroying the subjection of man to God, it destroyed at the same time the subjection of the body to the soul, of exterior nature to its king, who, alas! had forfeited, by his own fault, all right to such homage and obedience. From that fatal hour Nature, with its divers forces, has literally taken up arms to make war upon us. It is a struggle wherein neither peace nor truce are possible. Our labors, our inventions, our various industries, are all directed towards repulsing her attacks, or healing the wounds which she inflicts; and in this duel to the death man is always the victim, being doomed in advance to inevitable defeat.

Gradually he loses ground, his powers of resistance are lessened, his strength becomes exhausted, and at length the day comes when the wearied combatant lies down in the grave to sleep his last sleep.

At the resurrection God restores to him the privileges of impassibility and immortality; no longer by a special and exterior providence, but by the very power of the Beatific Vision, the virtue of which gushes forth into the very bodies of the elect. The glorified soul resumes over the body the sovereign dominion of the days of innocence, and immunity, henceforth, from the assaults or the control of any external agent. Harmony being re-established between man and nature, all struggle is at an

end, suffering shall be but a memory of the past, and immortality the natural condition of glorified man. (Supp. Quest. 84, 1.)

But this impassibility shall not be the absence of all organic sensibility. In becoming impassible the elect shall escape whatsoever, contrary to our will, strikes brutally upon our senses, causing them to suffer, but they shall preserve intact the power of receiving impressions and experiencing the most varied sensations.

This versatility belongs to the very essence of corporeal nature. Risen man, retaining his body, endowed with all its senses, should therefore be able to exercise them as he did upon earth. Therefore the eye shall see, the ear hear, the taste, smell, touch, continue to be acted upon by exterior objects, which set them in motion. As we shall see later on, God will give to the senses of man a field of operations, so to say, unlimited, but sensations shall be no longer either painful or disagreeable. On the contrary, they shall afford an ever new source of enjoyment to the elect.

Second Quality of Glorious Bodies—Clearness.

Doctrine of the Church.

Clearness causes the bodies of the saints to shine like the sun: "Then shall the just," says our Lord in St. Matthew XIII, 43, "shine as

the sun in the kingdom of the Father,” which was proven and made clear by the example of his own Transfiguration.

“He will reform the body of our lowness,” says the apostle, “made like to the body of his glory.” (Phil. III, 21.)

And again: “It is sown in dishonor; it shall rise in glory.” (I. COR. XV, 43.)

Now, this clearness shall be as an effulgence of light, extending from the sovereign felicity of the soul even to the body. Therefore, the body shall be happy in the very beatitude of the soul. It shall be happy by a participation in the infinite felicity of God.

Third Quality of Glorious Bodies—Agility.

Doctrine of the Church.

To this quality of clearness is attached a third, which is called agility. It will free the body from the burden which now weighs it down, and the soul can transport it wherever it pleases, with the greatest ease and the greatest speed. “It is sown in weakness,” says the apostle; “it shall rise in power.”

“Risen bodies,” says St. Thomas, “shall be absolutely subject to the soul, as to its motor, so that it shall be docile and prompt to obey the spirit, as regards all the movements and all the actions of the soul. (Supp. Quest. 84, a 1.)

This privilege of agility then gives to the human body something of the rapidity of the pure spirits, so that man shall continue to act as intermediary between the purely spiritual world and the physical and material universe. Through the soul he will be in direct relation with God and the angelic choirs, whilst, through the body, he will enter into relation with the regenerated creation.

We shall see that the entire universe is to become the domain of the elect. They shall traverse every portion of it to admire its infinite wonders. It is necessary then that the human body and the translation of the human body should undergo considerable modification. This shall be effected by agility. "The glorious body," says St. Thomas, "not ceasing to be a material body, shall occupy a fixed place as is seen upon earth. To pass from one place to another it shall be obliged to displace itself, and its movements shall be successive, but they shall be done in an imperceptible time, because of its brevity. Hence, a glorious body can cross in less time than another the same space, because time, however short, is divisible to infinity." (Supp. Quest. 84, a 2).

The ray of light which goes forth from the sun, the lightning which follows the cloud, the electric spark which, in a few seconds, makes the circuit of the globe, give us but an

imperfect idea of the agility of the glorified body. It shall promptly obey all the desires of the soul.

Urged to rejoice its sight by the beauty of the various creations, in which shines forth the wisdom of God, man, thanks to his privilege of agility, shall transport himself without effort or fatigue to the different portions of his immense domain. (Supp. Quest. 84, a 2).

“They shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint,” says the prophet Isaias, XI, 31. “The just shall shine, and shall run to and fro like sparks among the reeds,” adds Wisdom III, 7. Such are the images which the Scripture employs to give us an idea of the marvellous agility of glorified bodies.

Fourth Quality of Glorified Bodies—Subtility.

Doctrine of the Church.

In fine, to these gifts must be added subtility, in virtue of which the body shall be entirely subject to the empire of the soul, always ready to serve it, and to execute its will. This is indicated in the words of the apostle: “It is sown a natural body, it shall rise a spiritual body.” (Cat. Conc. Trid. Pars 1a, AII. No. 15.)

“The glorious body,” says St. Thomas, shall never attain to the dignity of the spiritual nature, because it shall never cease to

be a body. But to enable it to meet the exigencies of the new life, God will endow it with qualities which will bring it as near as possible to the angelic nature." (Supp. Quest. 84, a 3-4.)

It shall firstly rise above the necessities of this present life.

Now this body is an exacting servant, which too often imposes its will upon its master and rules him. It has always to be considered: labor fatigues it, watching exhausts it, it has need of care, of food, of sleep. Man seeks to maintain the equilibrium between the requirements of the body and the aspirations of the soul, but nearly always the first succeeds in obtaining the most considerable portion. It shall be otherwise after the resurrection. The needs of the body shall cease. Having become spiritual, it will no longer compel the soul to be concerned about it to the detriment of the soul's superior operations. On the contrary, the body will be an ever submissive companion for the soul; ever well disposed, and ready to second all its activity. Thenceforth, no opposition to its desires, no struggles, no passions.

All will be restored to order. The soul can at its will follow the noble aspirations of its nature, and give itself up in perfect peace, in unison with the body, to the study of the true, the beautiful, and the good.

The Man of the Future.

In the present condition of our existence these glorious privileges, which are promised for the future, seem very extraordinary to us.

We find it hard to persuade ourselves that they shall be, one day, the appanage of this human body, which we now see so miserable, so sadly disfigured by suffering, and above all by death. But who would ever have foreseen in the Jesus of the Passion the triumphant God of the resurrection. Who would ever have believed that his mutilated body, torn by scourges, dying upon a cross, should three days later come forth from the tomb living, clothed with the most marvellous qualities.

In order to make the glory promised to men after the resurrection credible, Jesus desired to give an irrefutable proof in his own person. Suffering and death had thenceforth no power over his glorified body ; this was the privilege of impassibility and immortality. That body had no longer need of food or sleep. Fully subject to the soul, it no longer restrained it in its operations. It knew no more the delay of walking nor the law of gravitation ; no obstacle impeded it. Swift as light, and as subtle, it penetrated the stone of the sepulchre and the doors of the Cenacle and, in an instant, transported itself considerable distances ; this was the privilege of spirituality and

agility. It was not possible for the Saviour to show to men the full radiance which illumined his glorified body: their eyes would have been too weak to bear such splendor; but the apostles who were witnesses of the glories of the transfiguration, the multitude who saw the Saviour ascend to heaven on the day of his ascension, could form some idea of the heavenly glory reserved for the human body in its true country.

Such will be the man of the future. Jesus is the new Adam, we are his children. The reunion of father and son must take place some day. The sons shall resemble their father, as nature decrees, and the promises of Jesus positively assure us of it.

“Father,” said he, in his sublime prayer at the last supper, “I will that where I am they also whom thou hast given Me may be with Me; that they may see my glory, which thou hast given Me, because thou hast loved Me before the creation of the world.” (John XVII, 24.).

CHAPTER VI.

Manifestations of Heavenly Gifts Upon Earth.

To strengthen our faith and show clearly that the human body, without changing its nature, is nevertheless capable of receiving new qualities, God has willed that we should have in this present life examples in the persons of His saints.

Impassibility.

So many of the martyrs, amidst the most excruciating torments, have felt no pain—fire and steel seeming to have lost all power to make them suffer.

In the year 177, the great martyr, St. Victor, a soldier, was pressed by the judge to offer sacrifice to idols. He answered: "I am a soldier of Jesus Christ, the great and immortal King. To Him alone glory, honor, praise, and dominion forever and ever."

His Torments Begin.

The governor commanded that he should be cast into a burning furnace. Victor thus prayed: "God of our fathers, hear a sinner. Save me from these fires that have been pre-

pared, so that these men, who know Thee not, may learn that Thou art the true and living God." And, making the sign of the cross, he went into the furnace.

Three days after the governor ordered that the calcined bones of the victim should be taken out. The door of the furnace was opened and they saw Victor uninjured, singing the praises of God. The governor then invented a most cruel torment. All the nerves in the body of that valiant soldier were cut.

"I do not fear suffering," said Victor, "but know that the torments do not cause me any pain."

They made him undergo the torment of boiling oil, of the wooden horse, of lighted torches, but the martyr remained always insensible to pain in the midst of torture. At length the baffled governor gave orders that the head of the intrepid soldier should be cut off, and Victor triumphantly entered heaven. (Bollandists.)

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The Emperor Adrian urged the noble Christians, Faustinus and Jovita, to sacrifice to the gods. He had a fire lighted and caused them to be cast therein. The soldiers of Christ, surrounded by flames on all sides, stood erect and motionless, their hands

stretched heavenwards, singing a hymn to the Lord. Adrian, terrified, caused them to be led back to prison.

A few days afterwards he commanded new torments. Boiling lead was poured into their mouths, but the lead flowed back upon those who were pouring it. Red hot plates of steel were applied to their sides, but they felt no pain.

Another martyr, St. Ferreol, felt no pain though thirty sharp awls were hammered into his fingers, hands, feet, and breast.

The acts of the martyrs are full of such prodigies. The divine power invested with a supernatural impassibility the body of flesh and bone, which was vainly subjected to the most cruel torments. The elements retained their natural capacity to cause suffering to the human body, as was often experienced by those who inflicted these torments upon the martyrs,—but the divine power hindered their effect.

Moreover, the martyrs were not alone in the enjoyment of impassibility; the lives of the saints offer numerous examples of it. St. Casimir proceeded to the church bare-foot over the snow during a severe winter, and those who accompanied him, half dead with cold, endeavored to warm their feet in the footprints of the saint. St. Peter of Alcantara passed whole nights in prayer in a

country place during the most intense cold, without any feeling of discomfort—the rain and the dew had frozen without his being aware of the circumstance. (Gorres, vol. I, p. 277—vol. II, p. 286.)

St. Catherine of Sienna, busy in the kitchen one day, fell into an ecstasy. Her sister-in-law, Lysa, perceiving her absence, went to seek her. She found that the saint had fallen from her chair, whilst her face rested on the burning coals of which there was a quantity. Lysa uttered a cry, rushed forward and snatched the saint from the hearth, expecting to find her severely burned, but, to her great astonishment, she had no trace of any injury, and emitted no odor of burning, whilst the ashes had not even adhered to her garments. (Gorres, vol. II, p. 45.)

Thus, even during this present life, the saints were enabled to reconquer the glorious privilege of impassibility, which was given of old to our first parents. This privilege was, it is true, temporary; the capability of suffering, the general law of fallen nature reasserted its rights; but these prodigies at least prove that God can make, the ordinary condition of all the elect, that which was permitted as a state of favor for some saints. In heaven the glorified soul shall exercise over the body a power, which shall prevent it from feeling even a suspicion of whatever at present causes

suffering. This will be the glorious privilege of impassibility.

Agility, Subtility, and Clearness.

In heaven, as has been said, the soul shall have so perfect a dominion over the body that it will cause it to move at its will. The body, unfettered by the laws of gravitation, endowed with a marvelous agility, shall follow the movements of thought and fly like it, through space. A celestial light, more brilliant than the sun, shall surround the glorified man and proclaim his glory. God has, indeed, willed that even upon earth examples should be given of these extraordinary gifts of agility, subtility, and clearness, promised to the elect in their blessed country. He has thus proved the capability of matter to clothe itself with qualities, which seem contrary to its nature.

In certain saints this subjection of the body to the soul was so complete that they seemed to have emancipated themselves from the necessities of this present life. St. Rose of Lima, during the whole of Lent, lived upon orange seeds. On Friday she ate only five. At one time, a small loaf and a bottle of wine lasted her for fifty days. St. Joseph of Cupertino, made seven Lents, of forty days each, in the year, and during that time took nothing, except on Sundays and Thursdays.

Sometimes, even the holy Eucharist supplied the saints with all corporal nourishment.

From the age of twenty, Saint Catherine of Sienna abstained from bread, then from all corporal food, without suffering the slightest injury to her health. She only felt the greater need of frequenting holy Communion. From that time forth it constituted her only food. (Gorres, vol. ii. p. 176.)

Saint Ludwina, for eight years, took no other nourishment than the Blessed Eucharist. The same is related of Saint Nicholas, of St. Colette, and many others. The body had become so fully subject to the soul that it did not hinder it in any of its operations. The saints passed whole days in contemplation, without experiencing either fatigue or the need of rest. They no longer seemed bound by the laws of gravity, for we see them rising into the air, traversing long distances in an instant, appearing suddenly in places far apart, as if their body already participated in the actual agility of the saints. St. Peter of Alcantara had made a little solitude for himself, in the garden of Badajos, among the magnificent pines. He was often seen there ascending into the air, in contemplation above the tree tops, and remaining long in that state. He was often seen rising in the air to a great height, whilst a multi-

tude of little birds circled about him, making a delightful concert with their songs. They alighted upon his arms, and rested there until he was awakened. (Gorres, vol. ii. p. 292.)

The life of St. Joseph of Cupertino is full of such marvelous facts. Once the saint was in the church, on Christmas night. Having heard the sound of hautboys, from some shepherds whom he had invited to come thither, to celebrate the birth of Christ, he all at once uttered a piercing cry, then fled like a bird from the body of the church to the high altar, which was at a distance of fifty feet, and in his ecstasy, he embraced the tabernacle, during the space of a quarter of an hour, without overturning a single taper of the many which surrounded it, or without igniting his own garments. (Gorres, p. 303.)

Another day, at Assisi, he perceived on the ceiling of the church an image of Our Lady. "Ah, my mother," cried he, and suddenly he flew toward her, a distance of eighteen feet from the ground. (p. 305.)

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After having heard the story of such prodigies, can we be astonished that the interior glory of the soul sometimes shines forth exteriorly and is communicated to the body? Every time that St. Philip Neri conversed

with St. Charles Borromeo on heavenly things, he saw his face shine as that of an angel.

It is related in the life of Brother Giles, a disciple of St. Francis, that when, at night, he spoke of holy things, he shed around so beautiful a light that even the moon at its full shone less brightly.

St. Bernardine, preaching in the church of St. Martin at Sienna, often shone with a marvelous light. The same is told of St. Francis de Sales and St. Camillus Lelis. Once, when St. Ignatius Loyola was listening to a preacher, at Barcelona, his head was suddenly illumined with celestial light, and St. Philip Neri declares that he often saw him in this state. (Gorres, ii. p. 64.)

These facts, and many others, show the capability of our nature to receive the glorious gifts which God shall bestow upon it after the resurrection.

The privileges of impassibility, agility, subtilty, and clearness shall reward the human body for the labors which it endured here below, and the sacrifices which imposed upon it in remaining faithful to the law of God.

CHAPTER VII.

Various Questions Relative to Risen Man.

A great many questions are formulated relative to the state of man after the resurrection. What shall be the nature of their bodies, their size, their age, their sex? Shall they rise again, with their natural defects, in decrepit or mature age, or finally at the age at which they were when they died? (Bible, Vence, dissert on the resurrection of the dead, p. 22.)

We shall confine ourselves to recalling the opinions of the doctors, and especially St. Thomas, upon these divers subjects.

I. Nature of the Glorious Body.

The body which shall come forth from the grave shall not be a phantom, nor an aerial body without substance, such as were those which the angels took for their transitory manifestations, but it shall be a real and living body, with its muscular system, its bones, its flesh, its tissue, veins and nerves, in a word, a body like to that of Our Saviour, who, after the resurrection, allowed Himself to be seen and touched by the apostles.

II. Identity.

In rising again man shall be invested with the same body which he had upon earth, and which enabled him to practice virtue. Such was proclaimed by the holy man Job, in these words: "In my flesh I shall see God, Whom I myself shall see and not another." (Job, XIX, 25.)

If the body did not remain the same it would not be a resurrection, but a new creation. The risen body shall leave in the grave whatsoever constituted imperfection and deformity; it will only retain those qualities which are the appanage of human nature and its perfection, such as harmony of form, strength, and beauty.

III. Beauty.

The hand of God shall correct what the feebleness of age, the sufferings of life, or the infirmities of old age have left defective in the body of man. All the blessed shall possess perfect beauty. (Supp. Quest. 81.)

However, that beauty will not be the same in all; it will have its degrees and shall be more or less resplendent, according to the merits acquired. The more numerous the merits, the more striking the beauty of the soul. Thus Heaven will have its aristocracy

of beauty and intelligence no less than earth, but this social classification shall be accomplished in a very different manner. Here below God places, according to His will, the cradle of the child in the humble dwelling of the laborer, or in the palaces of the rich. He distributes, according to His good pleasure, the advantages called beauty, strength, physical qualities, or mental talents.

Men utilize these various gifts in various careers which they embrace; by their personal labor and industry they make for themselves more or less advantageous positions, a greater or less share in the goods of the earth. Thence results a great variety in the unity of the human family. Now, shall this variety continue to exist in the future life? Yes, heaven will also have its princes and princesses, its nobles and its people of wealth; but the immediate cause of these differences will be the personal worth of each of the blessed.

“Every man,” says St. Paul, “shall receive his own reward according to his own labor.” (I. Cor. III. 8.)

Then shall be accomplished the final remodeling of human conditions, of which Our Lord speaks. Each one shall be placed in the rank which he shall have merited by his works. Many of those who were first upon earth shall be last in heaven; whilst great

numbers of the once poor and humble shall occupy glorious places in the aristocracy of heaven.

But this final classification shall be accomplished without prejudice to the universal charity, which shall reign amongst the blessed. Ambition and jealousy, those wretched passions of earth, shall not find their way into the heavenly country. Each one shall find his place there, and shall be satisfied with the share of glory assigned him.

“Each,” says St. Augustine, “shall be but little concerned to possess what he has not merited to become; as the finger is not jealous of the eye. Although it, with the other organs, assists in the harmonious composition of the body. Therefore, in addition to the greater or less gifts given to each, another shall be added for all, the gift of desiring nothing beyond that which is its portion.” (City of God, Book XXVII, p. 30.)

This is very happily shown by the Catholic poet, Dante, in his Paradise. As he passes through the various circles of the Kingdom of the Blessed, he addressed this question to a soul in one of the lower spheres :

“O tell me thou most happy born of shades,
If e’er thou dost a higher sphere desire ;
Where thou with wider knowledge mightst be filled,
And of a warmer love mightst feel the glow.”

And the shade answers :

“Brother, sweet charity doth calm us all,
And driveth far that thirst for other goods
Than that which here our portion has become.
If higher place, indeed, we still desired,
The harmony here reigning were destroyed
Between our will and His, who placed us here.
Most needful in our blessed state it is,
That we should fully keep our will with His ;
And so amongst ourselves shall have one will.
Thus, we within this kingdom range,
Degree above degree, find pleasure there,
In order fixed, as pleasing to Our King,
His will, our peace.”

The poet concludes :

“Thus did I learn that all is paradise,
Although the sov'reign Good unequally
Doth let His favors fall as pleaseth Him.”

Paradise, Canto III.

IV. Shall Risen Man Be of the Same Age and Appearance as at the Time of His Death ?

Here are the conclusions of St. Thomas, which he bases upon the text of St. Paul to the Ephesians : “Shall we all meet into a perfect man, unto the measure of the age of the fullness of Christ?” The holy doctor concludes that we shall rise about the period of perfect manhood, which commences about thirty years of age.

“Man,” says he, “shall rise in the greatest perfection of nature. Now human nature is in the most perfect state about the period of manhood. Therefore all men shall rise again at about that age.

“Man shall rise absolutely without a defect of human nature ; because, as God created human nature without a flaw, He will restore it in the same manner. Now, human nature is defective in two ways : either because it has not reached its final perfection, or because it has fallen away from thence.

“The first exists in children, the second in the aged. That is why in both, the resurrection shall bring human nature to the final state of perfection, which exists at the period of manhood, at which growth ceases, and the movement toward diminution begins.”

V. Of the Figure of Risen Man.

As to the figure of risen man, St. Thomas thinks that each of the blessed shall keep, except in the case of some gross defect, the figure which he shall have had at the period of manhood, when growth ceases.

The appearance, as well as the exterior forms of the body, belong to the very nature of the individual. Now the resurrection shall not change nature. Each man shall rise with his own body and shall preserve the accidental form which made his individuality. The elect shall then rise again, under the same appearance. (Supp. Quest. 81, a 2.).

On earth one man was distinguished from another by those exterior signs which spoke to our eyes ; the height, the proportions of

the body, the features of the face, the sound of the voice, and the expression of the countenance. Is it not then proper that these same accidents should still enable the elect to know each other in the heavenly country? (Vence, disser. on the Resur. Vol. XXII.)

VI. Difference of Sex.

In fine, shall the difference of sex, which belongs to the integrity of human nature, continue to exist after the resurrection? The Blessed Virgin, the glory of her sex, shall gather round her the virgins and the holy women, who, in different degrees, shall share in the radiant beauty of their queen. Each of the elect shall retain her particular countenance, and shall have her allotted degree of glory. Therefore, in heaven as upon earth, variety and unity shall rejoice the eye and the heart of the blessed. (Supp. Quest. 81, a, 3.)

VII. The Resurrection of Children.

Several embarrassing questions were put to St. Augustine by the pagans and unbelievers of his time, concerning the resurrection of children.

St. Augustine did not venture upon a decision as to whether or not they should rise under the form of children, retaining their diminutive bodies, because the Scripture has not spoken upon this subject; but he had no

doubt of their future resurrection. He believed it much more probable that they should rise at mature age, and with a body corresponding to that age. Then he adds :

“But, should it be granted that they may rise during the period of childhood, it does not follow that they will remain weak, imperfect, or unformed. For there is a certain beauty and a certain perfection, which belong to childhood, and cannot God clothe a diminutive body with the splendor of His glory?” (Bible Vence, Vol. XXII.)

Children, even those who died before birth, provided that a reasoning soul animated the tiny body, shall rise again. Whatever be the conditions of their resurrection God will endow their individual nature with all the perfection of which it may be susceptible, either as children or at mature age, as they would have been had not a premature death arrested the development of their faculties.

What will be the future fate of children, who have died unbaptized? Christian mothers will be anxious to know what the doctors think concerning the fate of these little beings.

VIII. Of the Fate of Children, Dying Without Baptism.

Theologians have long taught that unbaptized children, who have died without ever having committed any personal or actual sin,

shall be exempt from the corruption and the darkness of hell. But what will be their state and the conditions of their existence after the general resurrection?

This is the opinion of Suarez :

“After the resurrection,” says he, “these children shall possess a perfect human body, as far as regards the size, appearance, and age. They shall not rise again in the bodies of children, but as men, capable of guiding themselves by reason and exercising all human operations, which suppose neither change nor material decay. Health, strength, beauty, harmony of proportions—shall be the appanage of these bodies, and, as they are to be immortal, they shall be incorruptible,—not alone by an exterior providence, suspending the present causes of decay.

“They shall have no need of food to repair their strength, which shall remain undiminished ; walking shall not weary them, though this mode of translation shall continue what it is now.

“Their bodies being fully subject to the intelligence, they shall not experience any revolt of the flesh against the spirit, and by that fact be free from all sin. Finally, as the theologians teach, they shall not feel any sensible pain.

“They shall then have all the perfection due to human nature, and shall receive it from

Christ. In that way they shall resemble Him.

“It may be said in passing,” continues Suarez, “that it may be regarded as probable that they shall have some knowledge of Christ, whom they shall revere as their Lord, their prince and their benefactor. The demons are compelled to bend the knee at the name of Jesus, but these children shall voluntarily render their homage to Christ, whom they shall see at the day of judgment to be the ruler of all things.” (Suarez, edit. vives, Vol. XIX, p 235.)

What Will Be Their Abode?

I say abode and not country, because heaven, the true country of the saints, shall be forever closed to them. We are taught this by faith.

“The gravest theologians piously believe,” says Suarez, “that the earth, renewed and embellished by the fires of the last day, shall be the final abode of children who have died unbaptized. (Vol. IV, p 628.) They shall find there beauties surpassing those of the first terrestrial paradise.

Who can describe the scenes of grandeur or of beauty which shall charm their eyes, the harmony which shall rejoice their ears, the exquisite enjoyments which each shall taste in soul and sense. By the light of reason

they shall admire the divine perfections, reflected in his creatures, and bless the munificence of the Creator. According to some theologians, the angels of heaven—and why not also their parents from heaven?—shall take pleasure in visiting and conversing familiarly with them. Finally, as they have not been primarily called to heaven, it may be said that they shall be truly happy in their natural felicity. At least they shall enjoy a happiness far exceeding that which we can feel upon earth, or imagine by reason.

It is true that they shall never be of the elect, the citizens of heaven, but either they shall be unaware of their fall, or will be resigned to it, seeing that they have no right to the intuitive vision of God, and that they have not lost him by their own fault. An example taken from what is before our eyes may make this idea more easily comprehensible.

During this present life millions of men are far inferior in their portion of goods to princes of the blood or courtiers, who share the royal favors and the treasures of the sovereign. Still these men are happy, either because they have no knowledge of court life, or because they know that they cannot pretend to it. A humbler happiness suffices for them.

So will it be with these children, who, after the resurrection, shall become perfect and

happy men. They shall not possess the direct vision of God, nor the great good of beatitude, but their lot will be far from unhappy. During all eternity they shall be grateful to God for the benefits they have received, and the gratitude will likewise extend to their parents according to the flesh, whom they shall know and love with a special love. (See Corn a' Lapide, comm. on II. Peter, III, 13 and fol'g.)

These considerations will be doubtless consoling to mothers, who have lost children before baptism. But the knowledge we have even in this life of the infinite blessings incident to the sight of God and the possession of heaven, should induce Christian mothers, as far as it is in their power, to secure the beatitude of the just for their children by holy baptism.

They shall understand all this much better in heaven, where they will be enabled to compare the happiness of the Saints with the joys of a purely natural order, which shall be the inheritance of children who have died without being regenerated in Christ.

CHAPTER VIII.

Heaven the Country of the Blessed.

Where is the country of risen man situated? In what place shall the Lord Jesus reign with his saints? What are we to understand by that kingdom of felicity, which has been prepared for them since the foundation of the world? Let us endeavor to answer questions which are so full of interest for us.

The habitual and chosen dwelling of Jesus and his saints will be after the resurrection, as it now is, heaven. Our Savior ascended there on the day of his glorious ascension; there he awaits us; that is our future country, the true fatherland of the blessed; far from earth, where we are struggling in the midst of tribulations, and so preparing to enter that abode of happiness.

The patriarchs of old knew it by revelation, and this hope consoled them in their exile. St. Paul recalled it in his "Epistle to the Hebrews."

"All these died according to faith, not having received the promises, but beholding them afar off, and saluting them, and confessing that they are pilgrims and strangers on the earth.

“For they that say these things,” continues he, “do signify that they seek a country.

“And truly, if they had been mindful of that from whence they came out (the land of Canaan) they had doubtless time to return.

“But now they desire a better, that is to say a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he hath prepared for them a city,” in heaven. (Hebrews XI, 13.)

St. Paul thus sustained the courage of the converted and persecuted Jews. He urged them to turn their thoughts towards the blessed country, where Jesus would one day reign with his elect. Holy Church, too, in her teachings, her liturgy, her sacred ceremonies, constantly points to heaven as the true fatherland.

“Jesus Christ,” says Suarez, “after the judgment, shall ascend into heaven with the blessed: that seems certain by faith; because, according to faith, the proper dwelling and the place of glorified bodies is the highest heavens.” (Vol. XIX, p. 1102.)

But what is to be understood by this expression, heaven? Is it only one of those mystical formulae, expressing a feeling of the soul, though there is no real object to correspond therewith; or are we to believe that heaven is a definite place, a true country, a kingdom where Jesus lives and reigns with

His saints, as on earth kings are seen to reign in the midst of their subjects?

No one doubts that hell is a definite place, inclosed within exact limits, which the damned are forced to inhabit. According to the common opinion of the doctors, this country of despair is situated about the center of the earth. It is the land of desolation, where all that can afflict man in body and soul is concentrated: fire, horrible darkness, torments and chains, tears and grinding of teeth, horror and fear, the furious disorder of the elements, which serve as instruments of Divine vengeance.

On the other hand, heaven shall be also a definite place, occupying a special position in the works of God—it will be, it is, a true country, where Jesus lives and reigns with His saints.

Has He not told us that in His kingdom there shall be many mansions, that is to say, honors varying more or less, dwellings more or less sumptuous, according to the merits of the citizens.

Now all that supposes an organized society resembling our society upon earth. The saints will not be wandering through the vast spaces of creation, without any bonds to bind them to each other. On the contrary, they shall see each other, they shall meet, they shall converse, and in consequence they shall have a common country.

On the day of the ascension the Lord Jesus left the earth with His glorious body, and, according to Catholic tradition, the Virgin Mary, with a number of the saints of the Old Testament, followed with their bodies into the heavenly country. Now, the resurrection shall not change the intrinsic nature of the human body: it shall remain what it was before. Glorified man must then inhabit a country which will enable him to exercise his sensible faculties; his eyes shall see, his ears hear, his other senses shall partake of joys compatible with their nature.

In fact, when we pray to God, we do not localize our prayers; because we know that God is everywhere, and does not occupy any particular place; but it is otherwise when we address ourselves to Jesus, the God-made man. He himself has taught us, so to say, to localize our petitions in the formula which he has given us:

“Our Father, who art in heaven.”

It is to heaven that we direct our prayers, to the country where Jesus dwells with His saints, as a father in the bosom of his family, a king in his kingdom.

From these considerations we may draw the following conclusions:

There is in the general plan of the works of creation, a place where the Saviour will receive, at their death, those blessed ones,

who, weary of earth, have come to swell the ranks of His family. There is a definite country, where the just shall live together, in the company of Jesus and His Blessed Mother. There is a real region, where the King of Heaven habitually resides with them; a realm of joy, a land of happiness and beauty, where the just, after the resurrection, shall find in the charm of that heavenly society, and amid its exterior magnificence, everything wherewith to exercise their faculties, which they shall employ in praising God. Yes! that country exists, and we give it the distinctive name of heaven.

St. Stephen, the proto-martyr for Christ, caught a glimpse of that beautiful heaven, when he was on the point of giving up his life for God; filled with enthusiasm, he cried out: "Behold, I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God the Father." (Acts. vii. 55.)

St. Paul, when he was ravished to what he called the third heaven, beheld it. Its beauties and its goods seemed to him so far beyond all that earth can offer, that he despaired of depicting them in human language.

"No," said he, "eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love him." (I. Cor. ii. 9.)

What Heaven Is.

This land of happiness ranks first amongst the works of God, because Jesus chose it, from the beginning of the world, to be hereafter his habitual dwelling, as King of men and Father of the glorified human race. Because of the excellence of its destiny, it surpasses in beauty and perfection all the other divine creations.

In a far higher degree than the terrestrial Paradise, which was its image, it offers to man all that delights his senses and interests his intellect.

On the day of His ascension, Jesus took possession of the land of the living, with the saints of the old law. Since then He has beheld the number of His family gradually increased by all the holy souls, who have lived in a state of grace. If they be, in no wise, indebted to the Divine justice, they go upward immediately to the heavenly country. Generation after generation, earth sends its contingent of citizens to heaven, till the number of the elect, known to God alone, shall be complete. Then, the mission of our earth shall be accomplished; the world will come to an end, and the just, resuming their glorified bodies, shall fully enjoy the infinite riches of the eternal country.

Exile and Fatherland.

When the church, then, speaks of exile, of country, of reunion in the land of the living, the mansions of the heavenly Jerusalem, these pious and mystical terms express a great reality. Yes, man, at his exit from life, really enters into his true fatherland, and becomes a citizen of a real Kingdom, the common meeting-place of the glorified human race. He shall be admitted into that sublime society.

The conditions of life there are different, but the operations of human nature and its aspirations remain essentially the same. A traveler, who for a weary length of time has endured the winds of the desert and borne the fatigues of long journeyings amongst rude and barbarous tribes, rejoices, when returning at last to his country; he enjoys once more the comforts of civilized life and the society of his friends; he is the same man, but under different conditions. So, with the Christian, who, after the journey of life, enters his true country. He finds there his relatives, and there in company with Jesus and Mary, and with the saints, now become his compatriots, he enjoys eternal rest and happiness.

Where is this heavenly country situated,—the third heaven, whither St. Paul penetrated

even during this mortal life? We know not. Neither the church nor the doctors formulate anything certain on this subject. But this Paradise exists, it is real, it contains all that can render man happy in body and soul; it is the Kingdom. This is, indeed, a hope to console us in our trials and encourage us in our efforts, that we shall, at length, obtain rest and refreshment.

The Heavenly Jerusalem.

It is true that a sovereign is at home everywhere in his kingdom. Still he makes it a point to possess a capital, which shall be his ordinary dwelling-place, and where he receives the homage of his subjects in a more impressive manner. The more powerful the king, the more magnificent the capital of his kingdom.

There he builds the most sumptuous palaces, gives the most brilliant entertainments, collects the rarest products of art, and keeps his most precious possessions. This extrinsic magnificence magnifies the greatness of the monarch, and also increases the happiness of those who compose his court. The kingdom of heaven shall also have its capital, the new Jerusalem, where the king of the elect shall have his dwelling and reign over his blessed subjects. Neither ancient Rome, with its palaces of marble, its gor-

geous monuments, its treasures gathered from every nation of the earth; neither the royal residences of Nineveh nor those of Babylon, with all their Oriental luxury, can give an idea of the splendors of the heavenly Jerusalem. The Apostle St. John beheld it and has given the following sublime description of it :

“Having the glory of God and the light thereof was like a precious stone. . . .

“And it had a wall, great and high, having twelve gates; and in the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. . . .

. . . And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

“And the building of the wall thereof was of Jasper stone; but the city itself, pure gold, like clear glass.

“And the foundations of the walls of the city were adorned with all manner of precious stones.

“And I saw no temple therein, for the Lord God Almighty is the temple thereof and the Lamb.

“And the city hath no need of the sun or moon to shine in it, for the glory of God hath enlightened it, and the Lamb is the lamp thereof. . . .

. . . The angel showed me a river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb.

“In the midst of the street thereof, and on both sides of the river, was the tree of life, bearing twelve fruits, yielding its fruits every month.

“And there shall be no curse any more, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall serve him.

“And they shall see his face, and his name shall be written upon their foreheads.” (Apoc. xxi, xxii. Bible Vence, Comm. Corn. a' Lapide.)

With regard to the river flowing from the throne of the living God, and the tree of life which grows upon its banks, the learned commentator makes the following reflections :

“Why then may not the river of life and these trees and fruits be taken literally. If, in the terrestrial Paradise, Adam enjoyed all these goods, with how much greater reason shall the blessed enjoy them in the heavenly country, for the first was merely a sketch, an imperfect image of the second.”

Cornelius also thinks that the “oceans will exist after the resurrection, not, it is true, with their mists, their storms, and their unceasing agitation, but adorned with new qualities, which, without changing their sub-

stance, will endow them with new splendor and make them serve for the happiness and instruction of the just.”

“In heaven,” continued he, “there shall be real jewels, no longer those of earth, but of heaven, superior in brilliancy to those which we now see.

“The bodies of the just shall have their ornaments, their eyes shall be rejoiced by the sight of everything that is beautiful and pleasing. At present, the eye admires not only light, but also variegated colors, the green freshness of landscapes, fruits, and flowers, streams of water and fountains, clear as crystal, but above all, they are fascinated by the lustre of precious stones.

“These pleasures will not be wanting in heaven ; otherwise the just would have been happier upon earth than they shall be in their heavenly country.

It is told of St. Ambrose, St. Agnes and other virgins that they have appeared attired in resplendent garments, all decorated with gold and precious stones.” (And Apoc. XIX, 21.)

These reflections, be it well understood, although admitted by a certain number of Scriptural commentators, are but the considerations of a devout soul, who loves to dwell upon the great future life. The Church has never given any decision upon these points, but the authority of one like Cornelius á

Lapide is certainly not to be despised. Besides these meditations are beneficial to the heart, and the saints willingly made use of them to sustain their hope.

In the transports of their souls they loved to hail in anticipation that country of bliss, and to endow it with all that can charm the senses and the heart of man.

“In the land of the living,” says St. Peter Damian, “the roses forever in bloom shall occasion a perpetual spring; the whiteness of the lily and the purple of the crocus shall enamel the green carpet of the meadows; the harvests shall ripen, the flowers send forth streams sweet as honey; aromatics shall embalm the air with delicious perfume; the ever flowering trees shall be hung with ever growing fruits, the food of the blessed, who shall experience a never failing delight in partaking of their sweetness.” (Poems of St. Peter Damian.)

“Lord,” cries the devout author of the Soliloquies, which are attributed to St. Augustine, “Lord, the earth is an image of heaven, time a figure of eternity.

“How many torches hast thou lit in the heavens to enlighten us. How lustrous in their magnificence. How varied are the harmonies thou hast contrived to rejoice our ears; what perfume to flatter the smell; what delights hast thou prepared for the taste.

“If thou hast shown us such mercy and goodness in this prison, how wilt thou treat us in thy palace! If earth has so many charms, what then will be our true country? (Solil. Chs. xx-xxi.)

St. Dorothy, Virgin.

St. Dorothy, a virgin of Cesarea in Cappadocia, was brought before the Judge, Sabricius. He endeavored by threats and torture to make her renounce her faith, but that intrepid Christian begged him to hasten the torments that she might enter into the gardens of her Spouse.

“He invites us,” said she, “to the gardens of his delight, where, at all seasons, the trees are adorned with fruits, the lilies are ever white, the roses are ever in their first freshness, the mountains and meadows are ever verdant, the slopes ever shaded, the fountains ever sparkling, the waters ever delicious, and the souls of the saints ever intoxicated with an immortal joy in Christ.”

The Judge condemned her to death. As she came out of the praetorium, a lawyer, named Theophilus, said to her, mockingly: “Come, then, Spouse of Christ, send me some fruit and roses from the garden of your Spouse.”

Dorothy made answer:

“Most willingly, shall I do so.”

Just as she was at the point of death, being in prayer, lo, a child appeared to her all at once, carrying three fruits of marvelous beauty and three roses, wrapped in a cloth. Dorothy said to the child: "Take these, I pray thee, unto Theophilus, and say to him from me: This is what you asked me to send you from the garden of my Spouse."

And immediately after she entered into glory.

At the very moment when Theophilus was about to entertain his friends with Dorothy's promise, the child gave him her message and presented him with her gift.

"This is what you asked for, and the holy virgin Dorothy promised you. She sends it from the garden of her Spouse."

On receiving the present, Theophilus cried out:

"Christ is the true God, and falsehood is not in Him."

The other lawyers mocked at these words, and asked what he meant by them. Theophilus told them of his jest, then showed them the flowers and fruits which he had just received. It was in February and the whole country was frost-bound.

"Scarcely," said he, "had Dorothy died for Christ, when a child of diminutive stature, but of wondrous beauty, approached me; it touched me; I turned and beheld it. Then,

drawing me aside, the child spoke in language so graceful, that in its presence, I seemed but a rustic. He offered me the cloth, containing fruit and roses, saying :

“ ‘The most holy virgin, Dorothy, sends you these gifts from the garden of her Spouse, as she promised, at your request.’ I took the gift, crying out in my emotion, and the child disappeared. I doubt not that it was an angel from Paradise.”

Having spoken these words, Theophilus exclaimed :

“Happy those who believe in Christ and who suffer for His name !”

Denounced to the Judge, he was condemned to death.

“O Christ, I thank thee !” he cried out, and full of joy went forthwith to receive the imperishable crown. (Bollandists, Feb. 6.)

CHAPTER IX.

The New Heavens and the New Earth.

Heaven will be the habitual abode of the just after the resurrection. But what is to become of the earth, our country? Shall it disappear forever in the catastrophe which is to destroy its beauty and its monuments? Shall it remain after the conflagration of the last day, ruined and desolate in the bosom of space, as an old ship, which, having completed its last voyage, is abandoned upon the sea-shore?

Or rather, rejuvenated and purified, shall it be clothed with a new splendor and fulfil a mission superior even to its present one toward the glorified human race?

It cannot be denied that we are all interested in these questions. We are attached to our earthly country by every chord of our nature. We love it for the beauties it displayed to our sight in the days of its glory; we love it for the admirable variety of its landscapes, associated with memories dear to our hearts; we love it for the joys that it gave us, and finally,—Shall I say it?—we love

it for the pain it has caused us and for the tears it has made us shed.

By a mysterious dispensation of Providence, man attaches himself to the very places where he has suffered most, with a tenacity of remembrance which neither time nor the distractions of life can efface.

He may forget the dwelling wherein his happier days were passed, but he always recalls with emotion that corner of the earth which was the witness of his tears, and which holds in its breast the graves of those he loves.

Shall we, then, at the hour of death bid an eternal farewell to the earth, so long our country? Are we never to see it again? Were such the case we should feel that heart-ache with which the mariner gives a last glance at his shipwrecked vessel, and goes on his way full of sadness. But a secret instinct assures us that we shall one day see our earth again, and that in some way or another it shall be associated with our happiness.

Is this an illusion destined to perish in the grave, or shall these desires of the heart be realized? For the better understanding of this question let us go back to the fountain-head, and observe the relations which have existed between the material universe and man, king of creation.

The World and Man.

From all time the destinies of the earth, linked with those of man, likewise followed his varying fortunes. In the days of innocence she had only smiles and caresses for him. She offered him spontaneously her fruits and flowers. She displayed before his eyes the varied beauties which spoke of God to his intelligence, and rejoiced his heart and senses.

When sin had transformed the king of creation into a fallen rebel, the physical world also shared his disgrace. Stricken in its vital forces, it saw thorns and brambles grow up in place of those fair ornaments of the days of innocence; it became barren, whilst the various creatures, who had hitherto dwelt in order and peace, were deeply troubled in all their being. The struggle had begun; war was permanently declared, and became the ordinary condition of all living things here below.

But when man, on the day of the resurrection, shall recover his lost privileges, and his rejuvenated and glorified body be endowed with qualities surpassing those of our first parents, shall the universe likewise participate in that general renovation? It was with us in our trials, shall it not also be with us in our reward?

What do the ancient traditions of humanity and the doctors of the Church say upon this point?

Ancient Traditions as to the Renewal of the Earth.

Eight hundred years before the coming of our Saviour the prophet Isaias saw spread out before his eyes the destinies of the Church and of the world. He assisted in spirit at the catastrophe of the last day. Then he beheld the new Jerusalem, all resplendent with beauty, and, filled with enthusiasm, he cried out :

“Behold,” said the Lord, “I create a new heavens and a new earth. . . . You shall be glad and rejoice forever in these things.”

What is the meaning of these words,—a new heavens and a new earth? Do they foretell a creation of the Word, which is entirely different from the former one? or do they not rather predict a resurrection of the visible world, a change for the better, which will put it in harmony with the conditions of the glorified human race? To fully understand the sense of this prophecy, men had to await more precise and circumstantial revelations.

Revelations of the Apostles.

When Jesus lived upon the earth the apostles were most anxious to penetrate the mys-

teries of the future. According to the gospels they often questioned the Master as to the destinies of the world, the time when the present order should end, and the general renewal, of which he loved to discourse, begin.

When, therefore, the apostles afterwards spoke to the faithful of future events, they merely repeated to them what they had learned from the very lips of the Saviour.

Now, St. Peter makes the following declaration touching the end of the world :

“The day of the Lord shall come as a thief ; in which the heavens shall pass away with great violence, and the elements shall be melted with heat, and the earth and the works which are in it shall be burnt up.”

Then he adds : “But we look for new heavens and a new earth, according to His promises, in which justice dwells.” (II. Peter, III, 10–13.)

Thus Peter, relying on the words of Jesus, applied to the end of the world and to the abode of glory, the ancient prophecy of Isaias, which he also announced to men, “a new heavens and a new earth.”

Later St. John, describing the heavenly Jerusalem, employed the same expressions.

“And I saw,” says he, “a new heaven and a new earth. For the first heaven and the first earth was gone.” (Apoc. XXI, 1.)

The Apostle St. Paul.

Finally, the apostle, St. Paul, comes in his turn to confirm this prophecy by a striking testimony. He had already stated precisely the circumstances of the resurrection of the dead, and described in detail the privileges which should, then, be given to the glorified bodies. Now, he is about to tell us after what manner the words of Isaias are to be understood, and what will be the nature of the future renovation of our universe.

In his epistle to the Romans (VIII. 19.), the apostle speaking of the glory reserved for the true disciples of Jesus Christ, even in their bodies, expresses himself thus upon the future condition of the world :

“The expectation of the creature, awaiteth for the revelation of the sons of God.”

“For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him that made it subject in hope.

“Because the creature itself shall be delivered from the servitude of corruption, into the liberty of the glory of the children of God.

“For we know that every creature groaneth and travaileth in pain even until now.”

St. Paul here manifestly speaks of unreasoning creatures, subjected to a corruption contrary to the true order of nature, because

of the curse which the revolt of man against God had drawn down upon all things.

He announces their deliverance from "the servitude of corruption," and their share in "the glorious condition of the children of God." The final conflagration which shall engulf this material world, will be but a passage to its transfiguration and the prelude to its transformation. The fire will only cause it to undergo a necessary metamorphosis to put it in accord with the condition of men, themselves renewed in their flesh. (Laforet, Dogm. Catech., vol. IV, p. 366.)

The Doctors of the Church.

Such have been always the traditions of the Fathers and of the most celebrated Doctors of the church.

"The figure of this world shall pass in the fires of this world," says St. Augustine. . . . This fire shall consume the corruptible qualities of the elements which were proper to our corruptible bodies, but, by a marvellous change, the substance of these elements shall have new qualities, appropriate to our immortal bodies. Thus, the renewed and perfected world shall be put in harmony with man renewed and perfected even in his flesh." (City of God, B. xx, ch. 16.)

St. Jerome, St. Ambrose, St. John Chrysostom, follow the same idea.

“The words of Isaias, Behold, I create a new heavens and a new earth, show us,” says St. Jerome, “not the destruction of the heavens, but their change into something better.”

“Creatures,” says St. Ambrose, “shall perish as regards their present state, but only to be changed for the better.” (On the Epist. to the Hebrews.)

“When the heir to the throne is crowned,” says St. Chrysostom, “the woman who has been his foster-mother, shares in his royal treasures. So also, when man shall be glorified, the creatures which have served Him upon earth, shall share in His glory.” (Corn. a’ Lap.—Rom. VIII, 21.)

Opinion of St. Thomas.

Finally, St. Thomas, following the opinion of the great doctors of the church, explains the reasons for the renewal of the earth and the mission it shall accomplish for the just.

“The world,” says the angelic doctor, “was created in some sort for man. When, therefore, man shall be glorified in his body, the world must also be put into a better condition, because it will become, by this change, more worthy of the just, and more pleasing in appearance.”

Now, that man may attain to this glory of the body, everything which is contrary there-

unto must be removed, that is to say, corruption and the defilement of sin.

So, also, before the elements undergo this glorious transformation must they be first purified of whatever may be opposed to it.

“The leprosy of sin,” continues he, “does not, it is true, directly infect earthly bodies, but it causes them, nevertheless, to contract a kind of stain which renders them unsuited to spiritual ends. Even as it would be improper to celebrate the sacred mystery in a spot defiled by any crime, at least, until it has been purified. The fires of the last day shall effect this purification.” (Suppl. Quest. 74 a 1.)

Then the world shall reappear, adorned with an altogether new glory and beauty.

“The dwelling,” says St. Thomas, “must be suited to the dweller.” Now the world was made to be the dwelling-place of man, it should then be in conformity with him; and, since he shall be renewed, the world shall be so, too. (Suppl. Quest. 91 a 1.)

The New World.

Having been man's country in time, his place of exile and of trial, the earth shall share once more in His glorious destiny. Renewed, embellished with beauties superior to those which it possessed in the days of innocence, it will form part of the heritage which Jesus shall give to his elect.

For heaven, their habitual abode, will not be a prison, from which it shall be unlawful to go forth. The new earth will no longer be charged, it is true, with sustaining the existence of man, since his risen body shall be immortal and impassible, but it may furnish to the glorified senses, enjoyments compatible with their nature, and thus increase the happiness of the blessed.

By virtue of the privilege of agility, they will be enabled to visit the various portions of the inheritance, which has become their reward. As has been seen, according to Suarez, the new earth shall be the habitation of children who have died without baptism. Their fortunate parents, who are numbered with the blessed in heaven, will delight in visiting and holding converse with them. The other saints, though possessing their true country in heaven, will also take singular pleasure in revisiting the places, where, amid trials and tribulations, they gained the glory which they enjoy.—as a man, who has made a fortune, sometimes leaves the sumptuous dwelling which he inhabits to revisit the humble roof which sheltered his childhood, the poor home where he once lived in toil and suffering.

This glorious renewal shall extend to the whole creation. The stars of the firmament, which formed the noblest portion of our ma-

terial world, shall be changed to their advantage. Their light shall become more brilliant, their splendors more sublime, and all that, says Suarez, “for the glory of man and the joy of his blessed body.”

The entire universe shall thus become the inheritance of the just, and shall exercise a more exalted mission in their regard, as shall be seen later on. By virtue of the marvelous privilege of agility, which they shall possess, they can visit those unknown worlds, and admire in those vast creations, the traces of the Creator, His divine perfection.

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Who can paint the beauties of this new world? Who can speak the joys which He reserves for the just?

Can the cheerless dweller in the frozen regions of the pole, who has before his eyes only the scanty and miserable products of his native soil, form an idea of the luxuriant vegetation of the tropics, the gigantic trees which grow there, the magnificent flowers which they bring into bloom? It is thus with us, when we endeavor to portray the beauties of the renewed world.

“The earth, which held in its bosom the body of the Saviour, shall be as one vast paradise, and, because it was watered by the blood of the Saviour, it shall be perpetually

adorned with fragrant flowers, unfading roses, and violets.” (Elucid, III. 15.—A work which is sometimes attributed to St. Anselm.)

We are beginning to catch a glimpse of what will be the life beyond the grave. Even now the just have found their true country in heaven, with all the happiness they can desire for their souls; but this happiness shall be still further increased, when, at the resurrection, man shall once more take possession of his body, and the new heavens and the new earth shall be given as his heritage. Secure forever, in the love of his Father, the just shall enjoy all the goods which belong to him in peace.

The risen body, freed thenceforth from all that can cause it discomfort or suffering, clad with immortal youth and beauty, shall be endowed with new qualities, which shall give to the faculties all the perfection of which they are susceptible.

Impassibility, agility, subtilty, and clearness, without changing the nature of man, shall make him into a new and glorified being.

To offer to the senses a suitable field of activity, and an enjoyment in harmony with their nature, the whole universe, embellished and adorned with new graces, shall be placed at the disposal of the elect.

In peace and joy, they shall possess the magnificent kingdom, which Jesus, their

King, and their Father, has prepared for them since of the foundation of the world. Then, shall they be truly blessed in body and soul with an eternal blessedness.

CHAPTER X.

Happiness.

There is a word in human speech, which contains in itself all the dreams of our imagination, all the desires of our hearts, all the aspirations of our natures : that word is happiness.

We want to be happy.

That is the end of our existence and we set about attaining it with all the powers of our souls, intellects, and sensible faculties ; with fire of heart and energy of will. If success crowns our efforts it does not calm our ardor, on the contrary it inflames it the more. We must have more of good, more of enjoyment, more of happiness.

It is the universal law governing everything which has life upon earth ; unreasoning creatures, once having wherewith to gratify their sensible appetites, can rest tranquilly in the enjoyment thereof ; but man has made for himself a far higher and wider ideal of happiness.

The more he enjoys the greater is his desire of enjoyment. He seeks a happiness

which is boundless, unalloyed, never lessening, and never ending. He knows well, full well, that such desires can never be realized upon earth, but he finds therein, at least, a proof of the excellence of his soul and of the aspirations which urge it towards a better world.

The Dreams of Youth.

At the outset of life, when the youth is at length in possession of all the energies of his nature, and is preparing to enter the army of toilers, a dazzling apparition presents itself to his gaze.

Happiness is there before his eyes, calling him, fascinating him, while, with a graceful gesture, she raises the veil of futurity, and shows a whole perspective of joy, of brilliant success, which shall make his life as a garland of happy days. Then, with caressing voice, he is bidden to follow, and the young man entranced by a vision which so fully answers to the aspirations of his heart, rushes forward, full of enthusiasm in the pursuit of happiness.

“Yes, I will be a happy man! I will succeed in my business! I shall be a distinguished lawyer, or doctor, who, every day sees his practice and his success increase. . . . I shall have wealth and honors.

. . . I shall long enjoy the goods of life. . . . A brilliant alliance shall one day crown this brilliant career, and the dreams of my twenty years shall have become a sweet reality."

It is true that all young men are not so ambitious in their plans. The desires, the aspirations of the sons of toil, of the laborer, are no doubt more modest. But who is there that has not his petty ambition for this world? Who does not lay out his plans for a happy life, and arrange in imagination a most prosperous and happy existence?

Disenchantment.

Alas! the hour of disenchantment is not slow in sounding for most of the aspirants to happiness.

After persevering, but useless, efforts, after hopes, too often deceived but always reviving, the alluring mirage fades gradually, till it finally disappears below the horizon.

The dream is over, the reality alone remains, reality with austere countenance and imperious voice. Instead of the beautiful visions of youth there is the desert of life, with its aridity, its burning sands, and its storms, but also, with its few oases of happiness, which a paternal Providence provides for each man during the course of his journey to eternity.

It is strange that even the fortunate ones of life, who, after years of effort, have finally gained the riches and honors, so eagerly coveted, are disappointed in their hopes; the joys, which were so alluring at a distance, do not fulfil their promise. Pleasures, riches, always leave some corner of the heart in pain. Unforeseen troubles, often domestic ones, arise; lowering clouds show themselves on the horizon. It would really seem as if a mysterious hand let fall a poisoned drop into every cup of happiness which man would raise to his lips.

Why Is This the Case?

It is because this earth is not the land of happiness which we fancied it, and would fain have it to be; its pleasures are imperfect and fleeting, one excludes the other, the human heart is not large enough to receive them all at once, nor strong enough to retain them long.

Thus the parvenus of life, those men who would seem to have found the ideal of earthly happiness, far from uttering a cry of triumph, too frequently repeat instead the melancholy words of King Solomon:

“Vanity of vanities, and all that is upon earth is in truth but vanity.”

Grown old, man still sadly sees the brilliant phantom which enchanted his youth;

but, warned by the experience of life, he no longer seeks to grasp it. With calm composure he exclaims: "The happiness of which I dreamed does not exist upon earth; to enjoy it, I must go and seek it in heaven."

A Paternal Providence.

Admirable dispensation of an all-loving and paternal Providence. These earthly joys, imperfect as they are, fulfil an important mission in our regard. They help us to understand and to desire the far otherwise entrancing happiness, which God reserves for His children in their true country. This thought is expressed by a pious author, when, passing in review the various pleasures which God has left us upon earth, he cries out:

"Lord, what torches Thou hast enkindled in the heavens to illumine us, and how sublime and splendid are they! What varied harmonies Thou hast arranged to charm our ears; what sweet perfumes to flatter our sense of smell; what pleasures and delights for the sense of touch!

"Lord, those great promises of future good, which appeared to us at first so incredible, become as clear as they are certain by faith, which reveals them to us in the consideration of the visible goods, which have been given to our guilty and contemptible bodies,

“If Thou dost treat us with so much mercy and goodness in this prison-house, what treatment shalt Thou not accord to us in the fatherland! If earth has so many charms, what must be heaven!” (Solil. attributed to St. Aug., ch. xx, p. 21.)

Faith teaches us that God Himself is the author of these imperfect joys, which entrance our souls and make them happy. He Himself, even in this present life, reveals to us the riches of His divine nature: we admire His supreme beauty in the earthly beauty, which is but its faint reflection; we see an image of His sovereign goodness, of His infinite tenderness, in the sweetness of friendship, or the still more delightful affections of the domestic hearth.

When we experience an intense, never-to-be-forgotten joy, a drop from the ocean of happiness has been put into our hearts by God, who is its source. We cry out then, in a transport of enthusiasm: “Oh, if this happiness could last forever it would be truly heaven.”

Thus God, as a good father, consoles His children with some one or other of the fleeting joys they so eagerly crave, which likewise serve as a bait to lead hearts to the higher goods, which will one day be supreme happiness. This phantom of happiness, so entrancing to the human heart, appears in truth

before the eyes of every man who journeys upon this earth. However humble his condition, or wretched his life, he tastes, if it be but for brief moments, the delicious honey called happiness.

So that man knows what mean the words—to be happy. He has had a personal experience to teach him what a happiness would be like, which should satisfy, not one, but every desire of his heart, and which should last, not for a few days, or a few years, but forever.

Having initiated him into this most precious knowledge, God extends to man the most gracious of invitations.

“In heaven My saints will be all perfectly happy. In heaven they shall enjoy a felicity, which shall fulfil all their desires, and which shall be eternal. Even the most intense joys of earth can give but an imperfect idea of the bliss reserved for My elect in their heavenly country.

“In heaven the senses of man, his heart, his intellect, will be fully satisfied. I will give Myself, the source of all good, the cause of all happiness, to My saints. I will be their munificent reward.

“Would you possess this happiness? Would you one day obtain for your inheritance this heavenly country of joy and beatitude? . . . Follow in my footsteps, and I will make you eternally happy.”

And leaving the earth, God passed upwards into paradise. Man, charmed by these magnificent promises, strives to follow Him, saying :

“Yes, I wish for happiness ; happiness, which is without alloy or bitterness ; happiness, which is complete and everlasting. . . Therefore, I shall seek it in heaven.”

CHAPTER XI.

Illusions and Truths.

God is constantly giving to us here below proofs of an altogether paternal goodness, with the most consoling promises for the future. Whence comes it, then, that so many men, even amongst Christians, curse their fate, and employ the most energetic language to deplore the miseries which, they say, are heaped upon them throughout their lives ?

It is because they set up a false standard of happiness, and seek it where it can neither be found nor lastingly enjoyed. Judging merely by their natural instincts, they suppose that it is impossible to be happy without those sensible goods afforded by riches and pleasures. Their happiness would consist in having plenty of money, so that they may obtain as much as possible of this world's goods, and

especially in being able to give each and all of their senses the desired enjoyment. Is this idea of happiness a correct one?

Wealth procures, it is true, a certain material well-being for a man ; it spares him much suffering, and even enables him to enjoy many pleasures ; but is it, then, absolutely necessary to our earthly happiness? Is a rich man always a happy one? Is his heart ever contented? Are domestic peace and sincere and lasting affection in all cases the handmaids of wealth? Alas ! the experience of every day proves the contrary.

Besides, the lower portion of our nature, when sensible happiness reigns as a sovereign master, is too near the frontiers of the animal kingdom, and too subject to change, to satisfy an immortal soul.

Too often, also, wealth dangerously appeals to the worst instincts of our hearts and constantly invites them to cross the boundaries of lawful pleasure, and to throw themselves into excesses of all sorts.

If a man listen to these appeals, then, indeed, may he bid farewell to true happiness. A fever seizes upon his senses, and leads him into deplorable follies. The heart, disturbed by tumultuous desires, lives in continual trouble and disorder. Man becomes an animal, who understands neither his present duties nor his future destiny, and who only knows

how to eat, drink, grow fat and enjoy himself. Often, very often, those who are called the fortunate ones of earth are, in reality, the most restless and unhappy of men.

Besides, wealth will remain forever the inheritance of the few. Despite their efforts and their industry, the working-people, who compose the mass of the population, will never accumulate more than their daily bread, or, at most, a modest competency.

The passer-by pauses before the palaces of the rich, to admire from afar their wealth and pomp, but an enclosure, rigorous as a law, forbids him to trespass upon that privileged ground. So, also, the son of toil covets from afar that kingdom of pleasure, which seems so attractive to him, but he is forced to pause at the barrier, without hope of ever crossing it.

Is this an evil?

We Christians must, on the contrary, see therein a beneficent dispensation of Providence, who thus facilitates for the majority of men the acquisition of eternal happiness by refusing them the riches of the earth.

Riches are, indeed, as faith teaches, the most dangerous ordeal to which a Christian can be exposed. They are the chief obstacle to salvation. It is so difficult to regulate our passions when we have every means at hand of gratifying them. For a few rich men who will be saved, how many will find in their

money, and the life of pleasure which it procures, the cause of their eternal damnation.

Jesus Himself has told us this.

His curse was upon the rich and the fortunate of earth, whilst, on the contrary, He blessed the lowly, the toilers, the humble. He promised them the kingdom of heaven, provided they be faithful and patient.

Where Happiness Is to be Found.

So that, in spite of deceptive appearances, riches and a sensual life cannot give true happiness to the human heart. No; it is not there. God has placed it in regions, which, though higher, are more accessible to the generality of men. Or, did he flatter us with a vain hope when he promised peace to "men of good will?"

Now, peace is contentment of mind and heart; it is order and harmony, regulating all the actions of life; submitting the passions to reason and faith; uniting man to his God. Peace, in a word, is happiness, put within the reach of all.

To give a proof of it:—

Would you wish to see with your eyes and hear with your ears people, who without possessing riches or the obtrusive pleasures which they give, live in great peace, and enjoy an humble but lasting happiness? Let us visit together a family of Christian working-

people. There, strange to say, we find men contented with their lot, and who do not complain of the miseries of life.

A Visit to the Home of a Christian Workingman.

The house is humble, the furniture very simple, the clothing very plain, for it is the home of humble toil, of the man who gains his bread by the sweat of his brow. Yet, this family bears a resemblance to the family of Nazareth; the same life is led there, the same virtues practiced, the same sweet and tranquil joys are tasted. And who dares say that Nazareth knew not true happiness upon earth?

You are struck by the air of contentment upon the faces of father and children. You question the man, and ask him if he is truly happy. He will answer you :

“Why, yes, I am happy; as happy as a man can hope to be here below. I gain by my work a small share of the goods of the earth, but it is enough for my wants. The Catholic faith sets my mind at rest, and puts hope into my heart. Submissive to the laws of my Heavenly Father, I regulate my life and my household according to His commandments. I quietly enjoy the affection of my wife and children, the society of my friends, the lawful pleasures of life.

“When affliction visits me I accept it with resignation as the will of God. I know that, like all men, I must pay to earth my tribute of tears and sweat; but, to console me, I have the certain promise of boundless happiness in heaven. What more can I desire? Yes, I am truly happy.”

The Saints and Happiness.

So millions of men have passed their lives, or are still passing them, content with their lot; because, docile to the teaching of Jesus, they seek happiness where it is really to be found—in the peace of a good conscience, in the moderate enjoyment of lawful pleasure, in a loving submission to the will of a Father, who desires in every thing the happiness of His children.

This solid happiness is within the reach of all Christians; but the saints have most certainly had the largest share of it, because they best understood its altogether divine excellence. Despising earthly riches and sensual gratifications, which they justly considered as dangerous and perfidious, they applied their intellects to the understanding of heavenly things, their hearts to love them. Hence they went heavenwards, tasting even here below those joys, which surpass all that is most delightful upon earth.

St. Anthony, the great hermit of the Egyptian deserts, was easily recognizable amongst a thousand other hermits; because, as St. Athanasius tells us, his face ever shone with joy, as that of a man who thought of nothing but heaven. (Drex, Heaven, p. 49.)

Who can tell the happiness of a Francis of Assisi, singing everywhere his hymn of love and gratitude—singing to men,—his brothers, to the fish in the river, to the little birds of the fields, to all created beings? Of a Francis de Sales, a beautiful type of the happy man, who caused the joy with which his own soul was inundated to shine on all around him? Of a Francis Xavier, who, in the midst of his enormous labors, was unable to contain the happiness of his soul, and cried out to God:

“Enough, Lord, enough?”

Where is the happy man, amongst the great ones of earth, who ever gave utterance to such a heart-cry?

Christians, saints begin here below the happy existence which is to continue beyond the term of their mortal lives. Faithful to the precept of the apostle, they rejoice without ceasing in the Lord; nothing can lessen, much less destroy, their happiness; and death, by taking from it whatever is limited or imperfect, brings them into the enjoyment of that perfect beatitude promised by God to His children.

“What will this happiness be?

“In what will it consist?

“What will be its conditions?”

We shall endeavor to answer these questions according to the doctrine of the church and the teaching of the doctors.

CHAPTER XII.

The Happiness of Heaven.

Essential Beatitude.

According to a celebrated definition of happiness, in order to be complete it should include two things,—the absence of all evil, and the possession of all the good which is compatible with our nature. Now this is what God has promised to His elect in their true country.

Everything that is now opposed to our happiness, everything that can hinder or diminish it,—physical suffering or moral evils, sickness, infirmity, above all, death, the melancholy Queen of Sorrow,—shall disappear forever from the heavenly city.

“Nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more.” (Apoc. XXI, 4.)

In heaven the elect shall feel the pangs neither of hunger nor thirst, nor shall heat overpower them, nor cold, nor shall they experience any discomfort from inclemencies

of weather; the human body shall be in the enjoyment of perfect health, and the soul shall retain but the memory of the moral infirmities which caused it so much suffering upon earth.

But this absence of suffering can only be a preparation for true happiness. And man, in order to be happy, must not only be exempt from all evil, but possess all the goods which are in conformity with his nature. God gave them to him in giving him Himself entirely.

God seen directly by his saints, God loved, God possessed,—that is what will make the supreme happiness of heaven,—what the theologians call the *perfect beatitude* of the heavenly country. Let us endeavor to understand what that beatitude is, and explain the various elements of which it is composed.

It consists, firstly, in that the intellect, the most noble faculty of the soul, suddenly elevated by the light of glory, is endowed with the power of seeing God as He is, by a clear and unclouded perception of His divine personality.

“It is a vision wherein God is seen, not with bodily eyes, but with the intelligence. God is a spirit, and cannot be seen with a material organ. . . It is, therefore, the soul which sees God, and it sees him more clearly than all sensible things are now seen by the eyes of the body.

“The second element of beatitude is a perfect and ineffable act of love.

“The vision or knowledge of God, as He is, produces this love, because it is impossible to see God in His divine beauty, His love, and His unspeakable goodness, without loving Him with all the power of one’s being.

“The third element of beatitude is the joy which proceeds from the vision and the love of God.

“It is an act by which the soul rejoices in the possession of God, who is supreme goodness. He is its God, its inheritance, and its treasure, and in the possession of that sovereign good its aspirations toward happiness are fully satisfied.

“In fine, it must not be forgotten that the active co-operation of God is as necessary in the beatific vision as that of the creature. Therefore, the beatific vision signifies that God not only gives to the soul the power of contemplating Him in His ineffable beauty, but, furthermore, He embraces it as a beloved child, and bestows upon it that happiness which human eye hath not seen. . . . It further signifies that God unites that soul to Him after so intimate and marvelous a fashion, that, without losing its created nature and its personal identity, it is transformed into God, according to the words of St. Peter: We have become ‘partakers of the

divine nature.'” (II. Peter I, 4.) (Boudreaux, Happiness of Heaven, pp. 10-13-14.)

Let us seek upon earth for a comparison which will help us the better to understand this essential happiness of our true country.

The Son of a King Returning into His Country.

After long years of absence in a foreign country, the son of a powerful monarch returns at last to his country and presents himself at his father's court.

He sees a beloved father, who welcomes him, his face radiant with joy, his arms extended to embrace him—happy in pressing his child to the paternal bosom. The son is fairly overflowing with happiness. He forgets the fatigue of the journey, the dangers which he has run by land and sea, and the days of sadness and suffering; all that has passed away. It is a past which shall never return.

The souls of father and son reunited, shall be henceforth but as one. The father gives to his child all that he possesses;—his heart, with its treasures of goodness, of wisdom, of generosity; his exterior goods, his rich palaces, his vast kingdoms, his royal power; in a word, all that is his belongs also to his son.

The latter, on his part, loves his father with all the love of his heart, with all the

gratitude of his soul. Their existence is, so to say, merged in a reciprocal affection, and the intimate feeling of this union, added to the assurance that nothing can ever interrupt nor destroy it, makes the happiness at once of the father and the son.

This is, no doubt, a very imperfect image of what the doctors call "the essential beatitude of Paradise."

God and the Glorified Man.

After this earthly exile, when the just man enters into the heavenly country, he sees God face to face, immediately, clearly, as a father sees his child. He sees him as he is, source of all life, centre of all truth, first cause of all goodness, of all beauty, of all perfection. "We see God now," says St. Paul, "as through a glass, in a dark manner, but, then, face to face." (I. Cor. XIII, 12.)

And that God, embracing man in His paternal love, speaks to him those tender words which crown his perfect happiness: "Thou art my son; I am thy father; we are henceforth united for eternity." He will give him all that he possesses: "All I have is thine." (Luke xv., 31.)

He will communicate to him the goods of his infinite nature, he will pass into him, more intimately than the soul of a father passes into the soul of a son. Yes, God will

make of His elect, as it were, so many Gods, not, be it well understood, by nature, nor by the same right as Jesus, His divine son, but by adoption, and by a certain admirable participation in His own nature.

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“There will be,” says M. Laforet, “as it were, an indescribable outpouring of the light of glory, of the beauty of God on the soul united to Him, and the work of our resemblance to God, faintly sketched in this life by grace, will be consummated by that glorious reflection of the splendor of His nature in us.

“Our personality will not be destroyed by this singular participation in the glory of the divine nature. It will exist in its integrity, always distinct from the divine personality, but embellished, exalted, transfigured by its union therewith.” (Dogm. Cath., vol. iv., p. 2.)

“Dearly beloved, we are now the sons of God; and it hath not yet appeared what we shall be. We know that when He shall appear, we shall be like to Him; because we shall see Him as He is.” (I. John III, 2.)

On seeing God, so great, so beautiful, so good, man shall feel himself attracted thereunto with all the powers of his soul. He will turn towards Him, he will love Him with an immutable, boundless love. Nothing can

thenceforth separate him from that sovereign good, who will fulfil all the aspirations of his nature.

“There, are the eternal mansions, with the perfect assurance of their perpetual duration. There, nothing shall be left to wish for, nothing to seek, since in God you will possess all good, and shall have the full enjoyment of it. There, all shall have but one occupation—to contemplate the infinite beauty of God, to love His infinite goodness, to enjoy His infinite sweetness, to delight with an ineffable joy in His infinite glory, and in the abundance of the goods which he possesses and shares with them.

“Thence arise endless praises, benedictions, thanksgivings, as the blessed have reached the consummation of their desires, and, having nothing to wish for, rest in God as in their last end.” (Less. of Perfection, dir, B. XIX, ch. 5.)

CHAPTER XIII.

The Beatific Vision.

What Is God?

What, then, is this God, the possession of whom gives perfect beatitude to man?

“God,” says M. Laforet, “is the infinite Being, the supreme perfection, not only upon this earth which we inhabit, but in the universality of worlds, in the entire creation.

“The beauty of this little corner of the universe, which we know, charms us; its variety, as we observe it the more, delights, entrances, us.

“What if we were permitted to know all those myriads of worlds, which the hand of God has been pleased to sow in the immensities of space! Should we not be dazzled, enchanted, by the splendor and variety of the spectacle?

“But do not these varied beauties, which shine resplendent in the universe, come from God? Have they not their prototype and origin in Him? And are they not but a faint reflection of his divine perfections?

“We find, then, in God all that is truly beautiful in creation, and we find in its orig-

inal splendor that which shone forth imperfectly in the copies which the universe offers.

. . If the kingdom of shadow be so magnificent, what will the kingdom of realities be like?" (Laforet, Dogm. Cath., vol. IV, p. 272.)

Again, What Is God?

Let us call to mind everything upon earth which delights our senses, charms our hearts, or interests our intelligence; eliminate thence imperfections and weakness; carry, on the contrary, what is best in them to the highest level.

Imagine the grandeur of those worlds which shine in our firmament. Go in spirit to the heavenly city; admire its treasures, the beauty of its inhabitants; contemplate the wonders of the angelic world, the perfections of angels, archangels, cherubim, and seraphim; unite all these oceans of beauty, truth, and goodness, and we shall yet have but an imperfect idea of the magnificent heritage, which shall be the portion of the just in seeing and possessing God.

Meditation of St. Basil.

St. Basil found his happiness in this consideration. He loved to go upwards thus, step by step, to the very throne of the Most High.

"Christian," said this great doctor, "if you speak of God, or if you would hear him

spoken of, leave your body and your senses, and, with a mind entirely detached from matter, arise above all created things.

“Leave the earth and the sea, and, cleaving the air, soar far above them, putting beneath your feet all the elements, all the beauties, glories, treasures, ornaments, of this inferior world. Then, take our flight to heaven.

“Behold the sun, moon and stars ! Consider their sublimity, their light, their movement, their influence, their situation, their order, and their vast distances.

“Despising, once again, these luminaries, fly upwards to the empyrean ; there, in that realm of marvels, observe the incomprehensible beauties which everywhere abound ; those spiritual stars, which shine with a brilliant but pleasing light ; the angels, archangels, dominations, principalities, all those blessed spirits, endowed with great and exalted perfection. Having fully considered them, leave them all, and contemplate the divine essence, the first principle of all things, stable, unchangeable, knowing nothing that is strange, unspeakable power, limitless grandeur, infinite glory, abounding goodness, the one thing to be desired, the sovereign beauty, wounding all hearts by His countenance, indescribable by human tongue.

“Such is God.” (St. Basil, Hom. de fide.)

Degrees of the Beatific Vision.

All the saints shall be endowed by God with the light of glory, which shall enable them to see and possess him ; but they shall not all possess him in a like degree. That will be in proportion to the merits acquired during life. Therefore, those amongst the just, who shall be worthy of a superior, supernatural elevation, shall enjoy a greater degree of heavenly beatitude. With higher intelligence, they shall more deeply fathom the divine treasures ; they shall more clearly see the beauty, wisdom, and goodness of God, and more fully partake of the divine nature ; and this elevation shall be the source of the most exquisite joy to those blessed souls.

Souls, who have acquired less merit, shall be as inferior to the first in the enjoyment of happiness, as they were in degree of sanctity. However, they will be perfectly happy, in the sense that they shall enjoy all the happiness of which they are capable.

Therefore, each saint shall see God and enjoy God, in proportion to his intellectual development and to his supernatural elevation of mind, which shall be given him by the light of glory. (Boudreaux, Happiness of Heaven, ch. XIV.)

Why Are There Religious Vocations?

The eagerness of generous Christians to increase their merits continually, by multiplying their good works and devotions, is thus explained. They not only seek to have a place in heaven, but they wish to be rich up there. If their condition be humble here below, they desire, in compensation, to make it brilliant and distinguished above. To encourage them, they have the example of thousands of workingmen, of the poor, who have become great and powerful lords in the household of the Father of the family.

That is also the secret of religious vocations, by which men sacrifice pleasures, honors, riches, and the legitimate happiness of the present life, to secure those advantages a hundred-fold in the future life.

These noble-hearted men desire to have a large fortune in heaven. They are possessed by the same ambition for heavenly goods that other men have for the goods of earth. The more they amass, the greater will be their eternal beatitude, and they labor unweariedly to increase their spiritual riches, as a merchant toils to acquire a fortune.

Noble and beautiful ambition. It has the love of God for its principal motive, but it rests also upon the desire to win for oneself a great and glorious place in the heavenly

city. In the thirty-seventh chapter of her life, St. Teresa says: "I would not, by the slightest voluntary fault, lose the least degree of the enjoyment of God in eternity. I declare, on the contrary, that, if the choice were given me, I would prefer to remain a prey to all the afflictions of life, until the end of the world, if I could thus acquire a single degree more of the vision of God. . . . Yes, I am disposed to suffer everything, the better to know the greatness of my God, and the better to love him."

CHAPTER XIV.

Ecstasy and Happiness.

Answer to a Difficulty.

The sight and the possession of God will give complete beatitude to the saints, but this beatitude will not be a species of ecstasy, which shall absorb all the powers of man, and prevent him from exercising the activity which is proper to him.

We must fully understand this. Heaven will not be insensibility nor inertia in happiness. Neither will it be the absorption of the soul in the contemplation and enjoyment of an infinite good.

Our idea of the future life is false, when we represent it as an existence, which has no

point of union with our present state of being, nor with the present operations of our nature. After the resurrection, it is true, the human body shall have the new privileges of agility, subtilty, and clearness, but it will never be a pure spirit, and man will remain man with his corporeal senses and intellectual faculties.

In heaven there will be an intensity of life throughout our whole being, and we shall display an activity greater than that which we show upon earth. Were it otherwise, were the happiness of heaven to be reduced to a mere ecstatic contemplation of God, what would be the use of those faculties, wherefore those senses, why those glorious privileges?

Ecstasy Upon Earth.

We are in error, when, in considering the perfections of the glorified state, we attribute to saints in heaven the effects which ecstasy ordinarily produces in saints upon earth. Here below divine manifestations often reduce the body and the senses of man to a powerless condition. The extreme activity of the higher faculties, all absorbed in God, suspend, for a time, the exercise of the inferior faculties.

But things are different in heaven.

The soul will then have so much power that the absorption of its inferior forces will be impossible. The sight of God shall be

accomplished by an act of the intelligence, enlightened and strengthened by God Himself; but it will not in any way disturb the activity which we shall have without it. On the contrary, by a new outpouring, it shall give to our senses, and to all our faculties, more strength, suppleness, spontaneity, and joy. By virtue of the new energy which God will communicate to glorified man, all his intellectual powers, objective and subjective, shall be exercised in such a manner that one shall not predominate so as to hinder the free exercise of the other.

Let us, then, be on our guard against mistaking what is only an earthly weakness for the ordinary condition and permanent state of the saints in paradise.

The Saints in the Ordinary Relations of Life.

If we want to obtain a more exact idea of the condition of the just, let us observe the saints upon earth, not in their moments of ecstasy, but in the ordinary relations of life. Whilst keeping themselves united in heart and mind to God, their sovereign good, they had, nevertheless, full liberty to exercise their human faculties.

St. Francis of Assisi journeyed through the beautiful provinces of Italy, admiring the lovely or sublime landscapes stretching before his eyes, and mingling his hymn of love

with the perpetual canticle, which creation sings to its author.

Whilst loving God with all their hearts, the saints continued to love their relatives and friends with the most tender affection. Hear what St. Francis Xavier, the apostle of the Indies, wrote to his father, St. Ignatius : “You say that in the excess of your affection for me, you desire ardently to see me again before you die. Ah, God alone, who reads the depths of my heart, knows what a deep and lively impression was made upon it by that testimony of your love for me. Each time that I recall it, and that is not seldom, my eyes fill with involuntary tears, and, if the delightful thought occurs to my mind that I may one day embrace you again, . . . I am that instant surprised by a torrent of irrepressible tears.” (Letter 43.)

The love of God was united, as we see, in the heart of Francis Xavier with the most intense love for his father and friend, St. Ignatius. In fine, nothing sweeter nor more delightful can be imagined than the relations of St. Francis de Sales with his earthly relatives and friends, especially with St. Jane Frances de Chantal, the beloved daughter of his soul.

So that the most consummate sanctity does not prevent the saints from exercising any of the faculties of human nature. If they loved

God with all their hearts, they also loved their earthly families and friends ; the powers of their souls, directed by the good pleasure of God, animated by his love, retained the most entire liberty in their operations.

The Example of Jesus.

But why should we insist more ?

Have we not in the very person of Our Lord the most perfect model of man possessing God, and retaining at the same time all the activity of his human nature ?

During his mortal life Jesus enjoyed the beatific vision ; was he compelled by this vision to do nothing but contemplate the divine Being ? Evidently not.

“The divine Master labored, preached, journeyed ; ate, drank, slept, and did a thousand other things, though these exterior occupations never caused him to lose a single moment of the vision of the divine essence.

“No doubt the union with God in the beatific vision will cause our hearts to beat with a joy exceeding all that we can understand and enjoy in this life ; but it does not follow that this joy will suspend the free exercise of our mental faculties, or the attribute of agility, with which our glorified bodies shall be endowed after the resurrection. In truth, the contrary will be the case, for glory will not destroy but perfect nature. Activity,

either of soul or body, is an essential property, of which our souls cannot be deprived, without destroying them. . . . From which it results, that in heaven, we shall be far more active than we can be here below. All our powers will then acquire an energy and an extent of which we can form no idea in this life." (Happiness of Heaven, pp. 134–136.

Activity in Heaven.

Far from us, then, the thought that heaven will be a continual ecstasy or absorption of our faculties in the contemplation of divine perfections.

"Life beyond the grave," says a celebrated theologian, summing up the doctrine of St. Thomas, "is the end of the journey and the end of trial.

"There, then, will be no more fundamental, essential change in the moral state of man. This fixity is in no wise inconsistent with its successive activity, the essential characteristic of all finite nature. Man will be active in the future life as he is in the present. He will think, he will feel, he will love and desire, as here on earth. His acts (outside of the permanent act of the vision and the love of God) will continue to be subject to the law of succession, and there is nothing to prevent his nature from undergoing certain varia-

tions, certain changes, and from being subjected to some vicissitudes.

“The fixity of his moral state implies only that his thoughts, his feelings, his desires, shall be more fixed, more determined, than during the course of his earthly probation. His moral activity shall no longer be displayed in all the senses and in opposite directions. It shall be exercised in a more uniform direction, and shall not undergo fundamental and essential variations. . . . Human activity shall then continue to employ itself in heaven, with the successive character which is inherent in it; . . . but the direction which presides over its movements shall not change, at least fundamentally. (Laforet, Dogm. Cath., vol. iv., p. 235.)

CHAPTER XV.

Secondary Happiness of Heaven.

Theologians, speaking of the happiness of heaven, make a distinction between what they call the *essential* happiness of the elect and the *accidental* or *secondary* happiness.

This is not saying that there are two beatitudes in our heavenly country; no, there is but one alone, which includes at once the essential and the secondary happiness, but a

distinction is made between the one and the other, because the first comes directly from God, whilst the other also comes from Him, but through the intermediary of creatures. Let us explain this distinction.

Reunion of Soul and Body.

In heaven the soul shall not be alone in its enjoyment of happiness; the body shall also have its share therein. These two substances must be united, that man in his integrity may enjoy heavenly bliss. Now, the resurrection, by the reunion of the soul with the glorified body, will increase this felicity. By virtue of this union the soul can once more exercise the faculties of its sensible nature; it shall also recover thus the power of feeling pleasure through the senses.

To this end, God will renew the heavens and the earth, in order to give them as a heritage to glorified man. There, the senses of man shall exercise their activity; there, they shall feel the charm of the divine beauty everywhere manifested in the varied creations of the universe.

“The eye shall behold beauty under its innumerable forms, the ear shall hear the most exquisite harmonies, and the whole body shall continually receive agreeable sensations.

“The intellect, become great and almost divine by the light of glory, shall resume its

operations; it shall think of and contemplate truth, for such is its power and its essential tendency. In like manner the will, the subjective power, shall love God more than ever, and not only God, but all that is good, beautiful, and perfect, outside of God.

“The memory shall recall the numberless graces by which the divine mercy worked out our salvation, and shall supply the will with an eternal cause of thanksgiving. The imagination shall constantly produce enchanting pictures of the exterior beauty of creatures. . . . In a word, the saints shall experience all the enjoyments of their glorified bodies, and exercise all the faculties of their nature.” (Boudreaux, *Happiness of Heaven*, ch. VIII.)

Now, it is precisely the sum of all these operations and enjoyments, that theologians name the accidental or secondary happiness of heaven. Suarez thus explains and proves this secondary felicity of heaven:

“Jesus tells us of the joy which there shall be in heaven for a sinner who does penance. (Luke xv., 7.)

“This is evidently a new joy which comes to the blessed from an object outside of the beatific vision.

“Hence we see that certain heavenly joys come from creatures, whilst it may be said, in another sense, that all come from God, . . . the only source of every happiness; but

He makes use of creatures to finish and perfect the beatitude of the entire man.” (de Beat. Disp., XI.)

A Comparison.

The better to understand this secondary happiness, let us make use, again, of the comparison already employed in a preceding chapter.

The son of a powerful monarch, living at his father’s court, finds in his presence and his love the principal reason for happiness. For the son of the king, living in intimacy with his father, loving him, and being by him beloved, sees in him the cause of his supreme felicity. But this enviable position secures for him other privileges, both numerous and considerable. All that belongs to the king belongs also his son.

He enjoys the grandeur of the royal residences, the treasures, the beauties contained therein, their accumulated wealth; the court festivals delight him, and the eagerness with which courtiers bring their homage to the foot of the throne increases in his eyes the splendor of the royal majesty.

Again, he loves to journey through the various provinces of the kingdom, which are under the rule of his royal father. He admires for himself the order and tranquility that reign there; he notes the prosperity of the

citizens and their contentment, and everywhere finds proof of a wise administration, maintaining perfect harmony throughout.

Rejoiced at what he has seen and heard, the king's son feels love for his father grow stronger and stronger, with gratitude for benefits received from him.

Treasures of Accidental Happiness.

These are some of the treasures which the secondary happiness will give to the blessed in their true country.

The sons of God by divine adoption, they will find in the vision of their Father, and in His love, the first cause of their happiness; this will be the essential happiness, of which we have already spoken. But they shall find, moreover, great joy and great interest in journeying through the kingdoms of their Father, and admiring their magnificence; in taking part in the festivals of heaven, and in all the exterior good which the renewed earth shall offer them. So that, in heaven, man shall be entirely happy in his soul and in his body.

There, the glorified senses shall be satisfied. Each shall taste the joys appropriate to its nature.

There, the heart of man shall find again the enjoyments of social life, the sweetness of friendship, the charm of those still more inti-

mate and affectionate relations, which bind together the members of the same family.

There, in fine, the intelligence, which so much loves to know the truth, shall be fully satisfied.

In heaven there shall be no more secrets, no more mysteries. The mind shall see, not only some truths, but the whole truth ; it shall admire, no longer some faint reflection of beauty, seen in fugitive visions, but beauty itself, in all the splendor of its perfection.

We shall presently study, more in detail, each of these secondary joys of our heavenly country.

“O Paradise of delights, how I love thine incomparable beauties ! . . . Be my only consolation in this vale of tears. Extinguish in me all desires, or rather concentrate them all, that I may burn with that alone of one day sharing in the bliss of which thou art the eternal abode.” (Soliloquies.)

CHAPTER XVI.

Why We Do Not Desire Heaven.

The exile is ever thinking of his country, and sighing for the day when he shall have the happiness of seeing it again. The workman, the merchant, the man of business, sustain their ardor in their work by the thought of the money which they shall make, of the fortune which they shall realize. They neglect no opportunity of increasing their income, even though they have to toil day and night. They never rest until they are rich, and until they can enjoy the sweets of a happy life.

Heaven is our country, and yet we scarcely ever think of it. God has promised us there goods which shall fulfil all the desires of our hearts, and we do not seek them; we attach no importance to them. He offers us an immense fortune, far above all that we can conceive of what is most beautiful upon earth, and we scarcely care to accept so generous an offer.

Whence comes this deplorable indifference? From the fact that we give neither time nor trouble to the examination of the goods

which God has promised us in heaven. We do not try to appreciate the joys of which the blessed partake in their country. We refuse to suspend our ordinary occupations, even for a few short moments, to raise our hearts toward the incomparable goods, which must be one day our eternal inheritance.

Weighed down to earth, we run after its gold and its pleasures; we believe that happiness is there, and, despairing because we cannot attain it, we lament; we curse life with its miseries and its continual deceptions, and we call ourselves unhappy.

Great Hope and Great Consolation.

Still, in the designs of God, the certain promise of future reward is the balm which alleviates all the sorrows of life. To live in heaven, to be happy there with our parents and friends, to possess God, and the infinite and eternal pleasures of God—such hope should be the supreme consolation of the poor, of the Christian workingman, of all who suffer; it should encourage them in their trials, and be to them an anchor of safety, enabling them to weather storms, and preventing them from being dashed against the rocks of despair.

Poverty is a heavy load for you; you complain of being unfortunate in all your undertakings; you envy the lot of those who have

money, and can procure earthly pleasures for themselves. You call them happy, and consider you have the sole right to the title of unfortunate.

You suffer in body by reason of sickness or infirmity ; in soul, by the injustice of men, the contempt they show towards you, the persecution they make you suffer, their jealousy, their intrigues, their calumnies. You weep, and cry out that life is dreary and hopeless.

Whilst from the heights of heaven, where He reigns with His saints, Jesus reminds you of the blessings which he pronounced of old, in your regard :

“Blessed are the poor ;

“Blessed are they who weep ;

“Blessed are they who suffer persecution for justice’s sake ; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

“Be consoled, reflecting upon your place in the land of happiness. There you shall have riches, pleasures, honors, with my angels and saints. There you shall be first in the kingdom of my Father, you who complain of being now the least upon earth. . . . Courage, then, and confidence. A few more years of toil and you will enjoy an eternal future.”

And we refuse to listen to promises so consoling.

If the head of a large concern were to offer

you a partnership, with a share of all the profits, on condition that for twenty years you should accept the toilsome drudgery of the workshop and the modest salary of a laborer, —would you refuse such a proposal?

Jesus promises you a thousand times more, and something a thousand times better.

Be ye faithful to Him for the few short years of life, and He will give you His beautiful heaven for a heritage.

We Do not Know Heaven.

We do not desire heaven. Why? Because we do not know it. But it is our own fault. We will not reflect upon what Jesus has told us in the gospel, upon the graphic descriptions given us by the saints and commentators of Holy Writ; otherwise, we should soon feel our hearts inflamed with love for so happy a life, and we should ardently desire it.

Drexilius justly remarks that, "In order to desire heaven, we must often think of it. . . . We cannot comprehend the joys of heaven, except we reflect seriously upon them. An attentive meditation is required to throw light upon this hidden good. That is why St. Augustine says that, 'A meditative mind is the principle of all good'." (Drex., Heaven, p. 7.)

A Meditative Mind.

That is a wise and profound saying. It fully expresses the frequent invitations which Jesus gave to the Jews, and which St. Paul often repeated to the faithful, to “seek first the kingdom of God”, to think upon heaven and compare it with the most brilliant and the strongest attractions of earth, and to regulate our lives in consequence.

A meditative mind examines the value of present and future goods, giving to each the place which it merits in its esteem. It compares the future recompense with present toil and suffering and consoles itself by deciding that the sufferings of earth bear no proportion to the joys of heaven.

The saints were men of meditation. Those amongst them who stood in need of conversion, effected it by pondering deeply upon the happiness which God reserves for the just. Under the influence of grace and the divine illumination, they caught glimpses of heavenly joys, and the sweetness of that blessed vision penetrated into the depths of their souls, changed them, detached them from their passions and from earthly pleasures, making them desire only the eternal goods.

Yes, the true conversion of a man dates from the day when he turns to God and His Paradise. Then, once for all, he forsakes his

evil habits, struggles against his passions, and does what God asks of him, that he may be received into the land of happiness. Then he proclaims with King David his inalterable resolution : "Lord, I inclined my soul to keep Thy commandments, on account of the reward which Thou hast promised me." "I desire heaven and, cost what it may, I must become a saint." The passions may attack this resolution and, perhaps, overthrow it for a time, shrouding the soul again in poisonous mists, but in the bottom of his heart the resplendent vision lingers, and soon its glory dispels the mists of earth. The man becomes a saint, because he desires heaven. "To have that desire," says the pious Drexilius, "is to have at the same time a certain sign of predestination." (Heaven, p. 164.)

In an admirable page of his "Confessions", St. Augustine tells us of the heavenly vision which left an indelible impression upon his heart.

It was at Ostia, where mother and son, with their companions, were awaiting the vessel, which was to take them to Africa.

Monica, already transfigured by her approaching end, sat at a window, which looked out upon the sea ; the setting sun illumined with its rays the slumbering Mediterranean. Augustine seated himself beside his mother, and, hand in hand, they silently

contemplated that glorious and yet serene prospect.

Then, they began to speak of the divine work, of the poem of creation, and they soon raised their hearts to God, the eternal poet.

“Carried away by a transport of love toward that unchangeable felicity, says St. Augustine, we began to pass material things in review, one after the other, . . . and, ascending still higher, . . . in the delight caused us by thy works, O God, we came at last to our souls, . . . and passed thence to attain finally the region of eternal fecundity.

“‘And while we spoke of it and aspired to become intoxicated therewith, we seemed to touch it by one beat of the heart. . . . Then, leaving our captive minds and hearts upon those heights, we came to the region where the sound of the voice is heard, speech which is the beginning and the end.

After a long silence, when ecstasy had given place to meditation, Monica said to Augustine:

“My son, I feel that henceforth there is nothing to attach me to life. What should I do here below, since I have broken with all but the hopes of heaven? . . . I have nothing farther to do in this world.”

And a few days later, Monica winged her flight toward that beautiful heaven, of which, with St. Augustine, she had caught a

glimpse.” (de Ségur, Goodness of the Saints, vol. I, p. 104.)

Augustine loved all his life to recall that vision of Ostia. The thought of heaven encouraged him in his labors, consoled him in his pains, and filled his heart with the purest joy.

“O happiness of heaven,” cries he, “how joyful it makes me to speak of thee or to hear of thee, to read something about thy happiness and thy glory every day, to meditate often upon the things which I have read, in the refreshing breath of the heavenly air! I may pass through the fire of life and its perils, and repose my head to sleep in thy bosom.”

May meditation upon the joys of heaven, according to the narratives of the saints and the teaching of the doctors of the church, excite in our hearts a lively desire for the eternal goods. May it encourage us to merit them by our fidelity to God and the practice of good works.

We shall endeavor especially to describe the enjoyments of the glorified senses in our heavenly country, because, although this secondary happiness is inferior to the essential happiness, it is more easily understood by us and more proper to console us in our trials.

We shall pursue the following order: We will speak first, of the pleasures promised to

the senses of the just man ; then of the joys in store for his heart ; and, finally, of the operations of his intellect, contemplating truth in all its splendor.

CHAPTER XVII.

The Sense of Sight on Earth and in Heaven.

On Earth.

Of all our exterior senses, the sense of sight, beyond question, is that which renders us the most signal services, and procures for us the greatest amount of pleasure upon earth.

By it we enter into communication with the innumerable creatures of the visible world. Their images, reproduced upon the retina of the eye, pass into our souls and become their property. Then, by the aid of memory and imagination, we create, so to say, within ourselves, a whole interior world, the horizon of which is daily enlarged by the numerous sights which are presented to our view.

Besides, more than any other, the sense of sight reveals to us the mysteries of the invisible world. It shows us order and harmony reigning everywhere throughout the universe. It enables our intellects to pene-

trate the eternal and divine laws which preside over the motion of the stars. It leads us upward, step by step, to the knowledge of the Sovereign Master, to God.

Yes, to all men of intelligence and good will, creatures reveal a God, infinitely powerful and good, who must be loved and served. Therefore, St. Paul justly reproached the pagans for being unwilling to read the great book of nature, and refusing to God the homage demanded of them by the voice of creation.

The Christian and the Creation.

For the Christian, the contemplation of visible things is an easy method of understanding invisible things, and of raising his heart to the Ruler of Heaven.

When our earth has thrown aside the frosts and snows of winter, and is clad once more in her gracious robe of spring, when she is covered with flowers and verdure, when the trees of the forest joyfully resume their crown of foliage, when everything sings in its new happiness here below, the man, who is both good and intelligent, partakes, too, of this universal joy; he goes upward in spirit to God, the principle of all life and of all beauty; he adores and praises him.

Later, when summer covers the meadows with rich harvests, or autumn brings its an-

nual store of varied and delicious fruits, the good and intelligent man thanks the Father of heaven, who gives to his children, not only what is necessary, but also adds what is agreeable and superfluous.

In addition to such sights, which reveal to us the gracious attributes of the divine nature, there are others which give us an idea of its irresistible power and strength.

Let us cast our eyes over the vast extent of the ocean, with its continual agitation and its terrific storms ; a hidden force restrains its fury, and causes its waves to die upon the grain of sand which has been made its boundary. Let us observe the lofty mountain chains rearing their summits boldly to the skies. Vigilant sentinels, placed by the hand of God at various points of the globe, would it not seem as if it were their mission to watch over, from afar, the march of human events, and to teach us, amid the perpetual instability which is in motion at their feet, what are the eternal stability and immutability ?

Men and things pass before them and change ; they never change. Storms assail them, thunderbolts strike them ; but when the storm has exhausted its fury and sank beneath the horizon, the calm and majestic mountain peak quietly releases its summit from the clouds which surround it, and is once more illumined by the rays of the sun.

Man, by repeated lessons, has learned even here below what God is. He understands the meaning of those words, sovereign power and goodness, providence and immutable greatness, boundless liberality. . . His heart renders homage to the Lord of the universe—he adores and loves his Father.

The Sense of Sight in Heaven.

After having rendered so great services to man upon earth, will the sense of sight be continued in the future life as the instrument of varied and considerable sensible pleasures to the blessed? This is a most certain fact.

When man shall resume his glorified body, the universe, likewise renewed by the voice of the Word, will reappear, adorned with new splendor, to fulfil a noble and beautiful mission towards the elect.

“Glorified man will have no need of creatures to sustain his existence,” says St. Thomas, “since his body has become impassible. . . Neither shall he have need of them for the intellectual knowledge of the soul, since it will see God directly in His divine essence; but creation will serve for the glory and happiness of man in a different manner. The soul shall see God directly, but the body can never attain to this vision of the divine essence. Therefore, so that he may enjoy the divinity according to his nature, he will

behold it in exterior works, where he shall find striking proof of the divine majesty." (Suppl. Quest. 91, a, 1.)

The Sense of Sight and the New Worlds.

Therefore, the new worlds shall doubtless contribute their humble share to the general happiness of man. They shall offer varied and attractive sights to his eyes; they shall show him the divine attributes, no longer, as now, through the veil of mystery, but in the full light of glory. Each creature shall reflect, with admirable perfection, that divine attribute which it shall be its mission to reproduce.

Man shall find again in the heavenly country diversity of view in the various landscapes, which have so great a charm for his sight, and he will behold resplendent there what St. Thomas calls "the traces of God," the very perfections of the divine nature.

The traveler, on a summer morning, can but dimly discern the landscape at first, through the mists which conceal a portion of its beauty; but, when the sun appears above the horizon, the mists are dispelled, and the prospect is shown in all its radiance. In like manner we now see creation only through the mists and shadows which enshroud it, but in heaven human eyes shall admire its wonders in their full splendor.

How beautiful was our earth when our first

parents received it, fresh and pure from the hands of God. What immense vitality, what magnificent variety of fruits and flowers were displayed to their eyes before sin had cast a blight upon the glory of those primeval charms!

It was the land of joy and happiness, the paradise of delights, given by God as a heritage to His beloved children. Imagine, then, its riches, when, casting off the mantle of humiliation imposed upon it by the sins of man, it will be adorned with new beauties from God, to rejoice the eyes of the Blessed.

The Stellar Worlds and Glorified Man.

The earth, as we have said, will be but an humble portion of the total inheritance of the elect. His future glorification will extend to the entire universe, and the stellar worlds shall have their share therein no less than our earth.

“The entire world,” says St. Thomas, “shall be renewed to become more perfect. Now, the heavens are the most noble part of the material world; they shall then be changed for the better, and, since that cannot be unless they are made to shine with a more intense brilliancy, it is in that way that they shall be improved.” (Suppl. II, 91, a, 3.)

On a clear and cloudless night, when contemplating the thousands of stars, which

follow their silent courses through the vastness of space, have you never asked yourself why God created these worlds of light, what mission they fulfil, and what will be their future destiny?

Science tells us amazing things: the number of these stars, it appears, is infinite, their proportions immense, the distance which separates us from them surpassing all possible calculations.

“Our radiant sun, at a distance of thirty-eight millions of leagues, touches in some sort the boundaries of our sphere. . . Eight thousand millions of leagues separate us from the star which is nearest us. Plunge yourself into the vastness of the firmament, beyond the polar star; here is a star which marks one hundred and seventy thousand millions of leagues. Farther on, figures become exhausted, but science still counts.

There are stars so remote from us that a swift runner could not cover the distance which separates them from the earth in one hundred years, a thousand years, ten thousand years, a thousand centuries, though he were to run a frantic course, for that courier is light, light which consumes seventy-five thousand leagues in a second.

“Great God, what distances! But between these distances do you suppose that there is only the cold and dark abyss of nothingness?

No; the telescope, as it becomes perfected, reveals to us, beyond the six thousand lights which our eye can distinguish, millions and millions of suns, the light whereof, journeying since the creation, reaches to-day where we shall reach tomorrow." (Montsabre', Lent, 1875, p. 78.)

The learned have also discovered a singular property in those gigantic stars. Though the greater number of the stars are white, like our sun, some are red, others yellow. In a great number of binary stars, the two composite stars are different in color; sometimes the principal star is yellow and its companion blue. Other times, the principal star is green, and its companion yellow or blue. The cause of this fact is unknown. (Lesson of Cosm., A. Garcet, p. 234.)

Future Mission of the Sidereal Worlds.

That is about all that science can tell us of those sidereal worlds. What is their composition? A special analysis can tell us but little. Are they inhabited by beings like to us? Are they the country of creatures nobler and of higher nature than ourselves? All is mystery!

During this present life it will be always impossible for man to discern the secrets of those stars which move millions of miles from our little earth. On the other hand, the

angels, who are pure spirits, have no need of material worlds to know God and His perfections. Once more, then, Why this display of creative power? What, indeed can be the mission of the celestial worlds?

Does not the future glorification of man and of the world, resolve this difficulty and answer this question? Jesus has promised a magnificent kingdom to His saints. "Now, all these creations," says St. John Chrysostom, "shall become our property, not only as they are to-day, but such as the divine power and goodness will render them for the gratification of the elect." (In Epist. ad. Hebr.)

In endowing the human body with agility comparable to that of spirits, God gives His saints the power of traversing the various portions of his vast domain, without fatigue or effort, and of enjoying its infinite riches, and admiring its magnificence. Then shall be fulfilled the prophecy of the holy King David: "O Lord, our Lord I will behold Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers; the moon and the stars which Thou hast founded. . . . Thy magnificence is elevated above the heavens. I will give glory to the Lord according to His justice; and will sing praises to the Lord, the Most High." (Psalm VIII.)

Most certainly, the saints in heaven, who now know the richness of the heavenly inheritance, must look with pity upon men,

when they see them spending their energies to secure, for a few years only, the possession of worthless goods. What are the largest earthly fortunes, compared to that which God will give to His elect in heaven? The humblest of the saints will be a thousand times richer than ever were or can be the most wealthy and powerful monarch of the universe.

Why then do we only consider earth, when our Father constantly expects us to think only of our true country? Why are we so eager to gain a few dollars, and so careless about securing for ourselves a fortune which is immense and eternal? Why do we refuse a few years of fidelity to God, when He offers to us in return an inheritance far surpassing the richest heritage of earth? Would a man complain of a term of enforced obedience and labor, were he certain, on attaining his majority, to possess a large fortune?

Christian workingmen, toilers, for your consolation and encouragement remember the certain promise, which Jesus has made you: "Blessed are the poor, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

CHAPTER XVIII.

The Sense of Sight in Heaven.

Social Life on Earth and in Heaven.

If man enjoys natural scenery, he takes far greater delight in observing the wonders of the social world, and the numberless treasures which it presents to his admiration.

The magnificent capitals of civilized nations, with their palaces and monuments, their masterpieces of art, and their thousand products of human industry and activity; the brilliant social gatherings, with splendor of decoration, sumptuous garments, the beauty and nobility of those who meet there; the pomp of religious ceremonies; the enthusiasm of national festivals;—everything in social life combines to charm the eye, and to stir the heart with the most intense emotion.

The rustic transplanted into such surroundings is fairly dazzled; it seems to him a new and hitherto unknown world; a sudden revelation of joys and pleasures, of which he had not even suspected the existence.

The Heavenly Jerusalem and Its Wonders.

Will such enjoyments be given to the elect in heaven? Yes, the just shall see with their own eyes the grand social life of heaven, admiring the heavenly Jerusalem, the capital of the Great King, built of the most precious materials.

St. John describes it in the following terms: "The holy city", he says, "is itself of pure gold, like to clear glass, and the foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all manner of precious stones. . . . And the twelve gates are twelve pearls . . . and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass." (Apoc., ch. xx.)

"He expressed himself as he could," adds Drexilius; "he could not say less, neither could he say more; in the esteem of men, there is nothing more precious than gold and diamonds." (Drex., p. 288.)

Thus a poor man, suddenly transported into the palace of a great king, and endeavoring to describe what he has seen, tells of immense halls, marble columns, statues of gold and silver, untold wealth, but speech fails him to express his admiration.

The just shall see the palaces of heaven, admiring their beauty, their number, and their adornments. What are the richest residences of earth compared to the mansions of Paradise!

The Palaces of Heaven.

“Of old,” says Drexilius, “prominent theologians were of opinion that in heaven there would be real palaces, not, in truth, to protect the blessed against the inclemency of the air, but to augment the splendor of the holy city. ‘Is it to be supposed,’ said they, ‘that the just are left pell-mell in a confused mass, like a herd in a meadow?’

“‘I prefer to think’, said one of them, ‘that there are vast and magnificent palaces and other edifices, resembling in their charm the lustre of gold and diamonds, and causing delight to the eyes which see them. The blessed, beyond doubt, shall have dwellings, according to the very words of the divine Master; and why should not these dwellings be palaces? Not, indeed, to shut them in, but that one may be distinguished from another, according to his dignity, in conformity with the words of the divine Master: In my Father’s house, there are many mansions.’

“Whatever may be the value of this opinion, we give it only under the caption of theological opinions. Whether there be palaces or not in heaven, it is certain that the holy city is the dwelling of supreme beatitude, and that the beauty of that abode will exceed all that is most gorgeous and enchanting in this world.” (Drex., p. 221.)

Royal Receptions.

Let us pass on to other sights and to other enjoyments. Nothing upon earth is more imposing than those official receptions given by the sovereign to the social magnates and great functionaries of the state, at certain times of the year. Everything then unites to charm the eye and fill the heart with a lofty conception of the royal majesty.

In solemn procession pass the high dignitaries of church and state, representatives of the judiciary and of the army, members of the various civic governments, all richly clad in garments embroidered with gold and silver, full of dignity and nobility, to lay their homage and the assurance of their devotion at the feet of the sovereign.

The excited spectators watch them as they pass, the noblest of their citizens, the elite of the nation, and they salute them with cheers and acclamations.

Heaven, as we have seen, shall also have its princes and princesses, its high dignitaries and its aristocracy, according to the merits acquired during life. It will have its social festivals, as we shall soon see. Why, then, upon certain more solemn occasions, should not the celestial hierarchy present their homage and their gratitude to their beloved King? Then the just shall behold,

passing before their eyes, the martyrs, adorned with their glorious scars, bearing in their hands the palms of victory ; the doctors, their brows illumined by the aureola, symbol of their dignity ; the confessors and prelates, escorted by multitudes whom they have won to Christ ; the virgins, with their tunics of resplendent whiteness, enriched with pearls and precious stones. They will admire the nobility of the inhabitants of the heavenly city ; they will be charmed by the celestial beauty with which they shall shine, as so many suns. Yes, in heaven, the elect shall behold, in all the splendor of its admirable beauty, the human body, which even here below, exercises over the heart so powerful and mysterious an influence.

Beauty and Its Charms.

“Beauty,” says Drexilius, “results from a certain proportion of form and color which attracts the eye and subdues the heart.” (p. 176.)

Its influence is irresistible.

It makes itself absolute mistress of the soul, overmastering every other influence, enlisting in its service the varied powers of man,—intellect, imagination, memory, and will, all hastening to receive its orders and execute its designs.

“The ancients called it ‘a silent tyranny.’

They were right. It is truly incredible how beauty not only leads us, but, in some sort, forces us, to love it." (Drex., p. 176.)

But, here below, beauty is the gift of only a favored few. Besides, its attractions are often perilous, for, in many cases, the fascination which it exercises, causes grave duties to be trampled under foot, and, so to say, forces reason to abdicate its rights and extinguish its light.

In heaven these imperfections shall have disappeared, the dangers shall no longer exist. Perfect beauty shall be the appanage of all the just; but the saints can thenceforth admire it without fearing to disturb the harmony of their souls, because each power, strengthened by the hand of God, shall preserve its own rank and no longer seek to rule the others.

So that, in the heavenly country, the blessed can admire the marvelous beauty of the princes and princesses of the heavenly court; but their gaze shall especially rivet itself with love and delight upon the countenance of the Queen of Heaven, the Virgin Mary. They will contemplate that incomparable beauty, the joy and admiration of angels and men. They will behold in his glory, Jesus, the most beautiful of the children of men.

Of old, the apostles, catching upon Thabor, some rays of this glory, sank down in a very

ecstasy of happiness. A thousand times more blessed, the elect shall see that divine beauty in all its splendor, and neither eyes nor heart shall ever weary of contemplating and loving it.

“O my soul, were it necessary to endure all torments, even those of hell, to see Jesus Christ in his glory, would not it be worth while to endure these torments, and enjoy such happiness?” (Aug. Man.)

The Saints and the Vision of Heaven.

The saints, coming out of their ecstasies, could not find words in human language to express the wonders which they had beheld.

Saint Paul, ravished to the third heaven, repeated afterwards, with deep sadness:

“No, the eye of man hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart, what things God has prepared for them that love Him.” (I. Cor. II, 9.)

St. Teresa, beside herself, ran hither and thither through the monastery, crying: “I have seen marvels! I have seen marvels. . . The beauty of a single glorified soul is so great, that, were man permitted to see it, he would die of happiness.”

St. Ignatius Loyola, in his meditations upon heaven, and in his visions, had conceived so great a love of heavenly things that he could no longer keep his gaze from that

beautiful heaven. He was known in Rome as the man who was always looking upwards. So great was his admiration for the heavenly country, that he unceasingly repeated : “Ah, how vile and miserable seems earth, when I look at heaven.”

“Be consoled, then,” says Drexilius, “be consoled, all you who are in tears and suffering, you to whom earth offers only poverty and wretchedness. A day shall come when you shall be rich, when your eyes shall see and shall be overwhelmed with delights, when your heart shall expand and shall be in admiration.

“Even were there no other pleasures than those of sight, they would abundantly suffice to compensate us for all our woes.” (Drex. p. 187.)

CHAPTER XIX.

Pleasures of Hearing in Heaven.

The Sense of Hearing upon Earth and in Heaven.

“In the heavenly kingdom,” says Cardinal Bellarmine, “it is beyond doubt that glorified bodies shall have the necessary organs for hearing and speaking. All the apostles, a great number of disciples and of women saw and spoke with the Saviour after the resurrection.

“It is known by the Apocalypse that in heaven canticles of praise to the Lord are sung, and that these canticles, ever pleasing and ever new, shall wonderfully delight the blessed.” (Happiness of the Saints, B. IV, ch. VI.)

In heaven, the sense of hearing shall then continue to give man the double pleasure which it here occasions him,—the interchange of thoughts and feelings in friendly conversation, and the charms of harmony. The life of heaven will be a social life, as we shall see later.

The blessed shall have the most cordial so-

cial relations with each other, interchange of thoughts with their special friends, their own confidantes. The sense of hearing shall still permit those intimate outpourings of soul to soul, which are so sweet even here on earth, redoubling our joys by enabling others to share them. But, above all, it shall increase their happiness by permitting them to hear celestial melodies, the songs of our true country. Yes, the musical sense shall exist in heaven; it shall attain the highest perfection there and be the source of the most exquisite pleasure.

The Human Soul and Music.

What relations exist between the human soul and the vibrations of the air, set in motions by the voice, or by musical instruments? We do not know. But it is a fact, demonstrated by experience, that amongst all peoples, civilized or barbaric, music has always possessed the power of stirring the heart of man to its depths. It calms or agitates it at will; heightens its joys, soothes its sorrows; excites it to anger, or even to frenzy; or, gently, with its mysterious tones, dispels violence, as the breeze lessens the fury of the waves, and gradually produces, by its caressing voice, an unlooked-for peace.

Like unto an enchanter, music carries the soul into regions, which are not, it is true,

heaven, but which still seem to have nothing in common with earth.

“Amongst the things of earth,” says F. Drexilius, “there is none, which, in my opinion, approaches nearer to heavenly things than music.” (Drex., Heaven, p. 235.)

The Hymn of Creation.

God in his goodness has given abundant gratification to the sense of hearing upon earth. Nature in its entirety sings a perpetual hymn to the glory of its Creator. The little birds celebrate it in their songs, the winds repeat it to the forest trees, and the waves of the ocean sweetly murmur it to the seashore, or proclaim it with power and majesty, as they thunder in the breath of the storm. All creatures take part in the concert; each furnishes its humble yet thrilling chord in the hymn which creation sings to the glory of the Most High. The voices of nature are unconscious. But, behold! man, the king of creation, comes to lend them his soul; his intellect penetrates, as it were, into the very fibres of inanimate matter, giving it life by the invention of musical instruments.

Under the artistic touch, the dumb chords of the lyre become animated and speak; wood, brass, copper, find a voice, and are amazed at producing sounds so melodious. Man, associating these instruments with his deepest

thoughts, makes them give utterance to all that is felt by his soul under pressure of the multifarious emotions of life,—joy, sorrow, hope, deception; the outpouring of love, and the wretchedness of despair; the prolonged struggle between alternations of poignant agony or of reviving hope; the melancholy cry of failure, or the glad note of triumph;—all is expressed by music, and expressed with an intensity of feeling which human speech would be impotent to produce.

The Church and Music.

The Church could not neglect so powerful a motive of action upon the human heart; therefore, she has adopted song as the universal language in which man speaks to his God.

Her sacred melodies, her hymns and proses, repeat in turn the feelings which pass through the soul of the Christian; now, it is adoration and praise; again, it is fear and hope; on penitential days the notes of the *Miserere* arise as a plaintive supplication to the throne of God, to obtain mercy; whilst on triumphal occasions, the joyous alleluias of earth are blent with the alleluias of the heavenly country to express a common gladness. That she might still better interpret the various aspirations of the human heart, the Church has

given the place of honor in her temples to the king of instruments, the Catholic organ.

Its powerful voice is truly the universal voice of Christian peoples ; it sings with the freshness of childhood, it catches the thrilling accents of youth, it utters the deeper notes of mature years; it speaks the varied languages of the soul, interprets all its sentiments, and echoes all the harmonies of earth, uniting them in one grand symphony of glory and honor to Jesus, the King of the universe.

By virtue of these musical instruments, man singularly heightens the pomp of his religious and national feasts, whilst in the privacy of the domestic hearth they charm his leisure, and he finds sweet rest in listening to the melodies, which at once delight his ear and his heart.

Harmony in Heaven.

This flood of harmony will one day cross the threshold of eternity. In heaven its sweetest chords will be heard, lending its tones to the blessed to sing their happiness and their gratitude. "The saints shall rejoice in glory. . . . The high praises of God shall be in their mouth." (Ps. CXLIX, 5.)

"It has been said that music was born of love and joy. Now, the saints in heaven burn with the love of God, and are intoxicated with joy. Is it surprising then that they should

sing, or that their united voices should form the most harmonious of choirs?" (Drex., p. 240.)

Even here below, the echo of those heavenly melodies filled their hearts with a most exquisite delight. St. Cecilia lent a listening ear to the concerts of the Blessed Spirits, and, desiring no other joy, longed for death that she might go to heaven and fully enjoy those divine harmonies.

St. Bonaventure relates that when St. Francis d'Assisi lay upon his bed of death, he begged, that in order to alleviate his sufferings, one of the monks, named Father Pacificus, who skilfully touched the lute, should fetch his instrument and play him some melody.

"I would willingly do it, my good Father," replied the monk, "did I not fear to inconvenience the other religious of our monastery."

"It is well;" said St. Francis, "let us speak no more of it."

"But God, who had heard his request, sent him an angel, a single angel with his lute, who played in so exquisite a manner that Francis was enchanted, and forgot his sufferings." (Drex., p. 242.)

If such were the effect produced by a single heavenly musician, what will it be, when millions of angels and of the blessed shall thrill the celestial mansions with their songs?

The Apostle St. John, assisting in spirit at one of these great festivals of heaven, heard the melody of heavenly instruments, the canticles by which the angels and the blessed vie with each other in celebrating the glory of the Creator.

“And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne; . . . and the number of them was thousands of thousands, saying, with a loud voice: The Lamb that was slain is worthy to receive power and divinity. . . .

“And the voice, which I heard, was as the voice of harpers, harping on their harps. . .

“After these things I heard, as it were, the voice of much people in heaven, saying: Alleluia! . . . and again they said: Alleluia!” (Apoc.) ,

As here below, two powerful choirs render, each in turn, their musical phrases, striving to surpass each other in sweetness and strength, or mingling their tones, blend at length in majestic harmonies, so, in heaven, the human race and the angelic race, rivaling each other in ardor, will give forth hymns of love and canticles of thanksgiving. Then, uniting in harmonious accord, they will cry:

“To Him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb: benediction, and honor, and glory, and power, forever and ever, to the common Father of that happy family.” (Apoc. v., 14.)

CHAPTER XX.

Smell, Taste, and Touch in Heaven.

All the senses of man suffer pain here below; all shall likewise have part in the reward in heaven. "The sight, the hearing, the smell, the taste, and the touch shall enjoy inestimable pleasures in heaven." So speaks St. Anselm, and Catholic theologians express themselves in the same manner. (See Suarez III. a, Pars V., II., D. 47.)

Sweet perfumes shall embalm the air and delight the smell of the elect. The bodies of the saints shall exhale an odor more agreeable than the most exquisite scents of earth. Even in the present life, God has given us a proof of this, in communicating to the persons of certain saints, and to their bones, a delicious fragrance.

St. Gregory of Tours cites the example of a beggar named Servulus. After his death, his body exhaled so delightful a perfume that the attendants were filled with wonderful sweetness.

Church history tells us the same of the bodies of St. Jerome, St. Philip Neri, St. Magdalen of Pazzi, and many others.

This was also the permanent miracle presented by the bodies of St. Francis Xavier at Goa, and St. Teresa at Avila.

“Scarcely,” says her biographer, “had the heart of the saint shown to the piety of the faithful that God had granted her the gift of miracles, when a celestial odor, from that time forth, began to be exhaled, which never ceased till the present time. This perfume is so sweet that it cannot be compared with any earthly fragrance, and the acts of canonization tell all in a single sentence: ‘It is a heavenly odor.’” (Bouix., *Life of St. Teresa*, p. 625.)

Pleasures of the Taste in Heaven.

Even for the humblest of the senses, God, in his goodness, reserves pleasures suitable and appropriate to their nature. The taste will not be employed, it is true, in heaven, under the same conditions as upon earth. We shall no longer require to take food to keep up our strength; the body will be above that necessity; but God will give to the taste, enjoyments compatible with its new conditions.

Does not Jesus show us his elect seated at his table, and enjoying with him the delicious viands of the heavenly country? Has he not spoken in his gospel, of the wedding feast, of

the heavenly banquet? "Blessed are those servants whom the Lord, when he cometh, shall find watching. Amen. I say to you that he will gird himself and make them sit down to meat, and, passing, will minister unto them." (Luke XII, 37.)

"Did not our Lord, who is the model of the blessed in the land of the living, seat himself at table, after the resurrection, and eat with his apostles? This action proves that mastication has nothing incompatible with the condition of the glorious body." (Gaume, *La Vie*, p. 327.)

During the imprisonment of the two martyrs, Marianus and James, the latter had a vision, wherein was shown to him the martyr Agapus, seated at a great feast.

Some days after, as they were being conducted to torture, they met a child, whom they knew to have been martyred three days before with his mother. This child, who wore upon his head a crown of roses and carried a green palm in his hand, said to them:

"Whither go ye, valiant men? Rejoice, for tomorrow you will sup with us in heaven." And the child disappeared.

What he had predicted, occurred. On the following day the two confessors suffered martyrdom, and passed thus to the festival of their heavenly father.

The Sense of Touch in Heaven.

The sense of touch is that which, of all our senses, had most to suffer upon earth. Daily toil imposed severe penance upon it; heat and cold afflicted it and caused it suffering; blows and wounds, illness of every kind, assailed and tormented it; finally, death ground it as the wheat is ground to become bread.

But, if the Christian can only endure these miseries, great shall be his joy at being freed from them in the heavenly country. In heaven is neither pain, nor suffering, nor wearisome toil. Man shall enjoy perfect and invariable health; and the body, by the powerful influence of the soul, which will penetrate its every part, shall be no longer a prey to painful impressions; everything will give it pleasure, and everything will contribute to make it happy. Let us emphasize this fact.

That glorified body will not be a phantom, but a living, palpable body, which can be touched as the apostles touched the body of the Saviour. It will retain its sensibility, but shall experience only pure and pleasing impressions; because, far from seeking to impose its laws upon reason, as it does upon earth, it will be absolutely subject to the guidance of reason.

Here, then, is the felicity which God promises to the senses of man in his true country.

If we are not yet capable of enjoying spiritual sweetness, at least, according to the saying of Cardinal Bellarmine, let us often think of these sensible goods, and by thinking of them learn to desire and to seek them.

“We might afterward rise higher, but it would be with the divine assistance, one step toward the eternal beatitude.” (Happiness of the Saints, Book IV, ch. VIII.)

The Thought of Heaven and the Christian Workingman.

What an encouragement it is for the poor and the hard-working, who have never had either riches or pleasures upon earth, to remember the fair promise of heaven! What consolation for hearts often sorely afflicted by the miseries of life, weighed down by trials which seem to shut out all hope of happiness here below!

The workingman, who is obliged to begin his weary toil every day, receiving in return a salary which is always less than his desires, and sometimes barely sufficient for the necessities of life, is often driven to complain of the hardness of his lot, and to murmur against Providence.

He sees around him the rich, leading an idle and sensual life, and, comparing his existence with theirs, he feels the demon of envy gnawing at his heart.

“These men have everything they can wish for—their days are one long holiday; they enjoy all the pleasures they can ask for. . . . Why, then, should they have all the joy and I all the suffering? Why, rest for them, and for me hard work; for them songs of joy, abundance, all the delights of earth, and for me, for my wife and children, tears, poverty, misery?”

And, with the thirst of enjoyment burning in his heart, the workingman is tempted, not only to better his condition by legitimate means, but in his turn to seize upon fortune, by any means, honest or not.

And perfidious counsellors urge him to revolt, promising him a delusive happiness, which he cannot attain but by revolution and ruin.

Were the end of life only immediate enjoyment, limited to the present, who could say that this man is wrong? Who dares say to him :

“Society demands the distinction of classes. In order that society may exist and perform its functions happily, there must be capitalists and laborers, rich and poor. You have the misfortune to be of the latter number. Submit to your lot, accept the inevitable. Try to raise yourself if you can by your industry and personal efforts, but respect the law. Keep your place and leave the rich in theirs.”

In fact, such an answer, true and just as it may be, is still scarcely of a nature to calm meetings of excited workmen, and, if there were not other consolations to offer, it would be hard to make them put aside their projects of revolution and social upheaval.

The Church and the Christian Workingman.

But the Church has language for the man soured by misfortune, which is well calculated to calm the storms of his heart and to awaken the sweetest hopes.

“Your position is an humble one, it is true. Your work is fatiguing, and you have to begin it again, day after day, to give bread to your wife and your little children. You will be always a poor man ; but, christian, remember my teachings. The present life is but an apprenticeship for the future life, sowing today what shall be reaped tomorrow.

“After labor comes rest; after earth, heaven. During this present life I will protect you all I can from the injustice of the powerful ; I will defend your rights, and, to the best of my power, ameliorate your condition ; as a good mother, I will dry your tears and alleviate your sufferings ; but, as to the happiness of which you dream, it must be sought in heaven.

“The rich seem to you happy, because they possess some acres of land, some mansions,

wherein every enjoyment is offered to their senses. But, if you remain faithful to your Father, if you accept with resignation the situation in which He has placed you, in a few years you shall possess as your inheritance, not only the earth, but the millions and millions of worlds which move in the firmament.

“In the great capital of Jesus Christ, you shall inhabit a dwelling, the more beautiful in proportion as you have been more humble here below. Your senses shall enjoy pleasures surpassing all that you can imagine; your eyes shall see the magnificence of the renovated world; they shall behold the festivals of heaven; they shall admire the beauty and brilliancy of the dwellers in the holy city. Your ears shall rejoice in the divine concerts. Your entire senses shall be fully satisfied and happy,—and that happiness shall know no change, nor shall it be overshadowed by the fear of death; it shall be immortal.

“Is this not sufficient to make you bear the miseries of the present life with patience, and to console you in your trials? What millions of Christian workingmen are now blessing God in heaven for having placed them in an humble condition, which preserved them from the most dangerous temptations of earth, and enabled them easily to gain an eternal fortune.”

Peace and Hope.

And the Christian laborer, reconciled to his lot, follows the toilsome but sure road, which leads him from earth to heaven. His thoughts thenceforth directed towards a brilliant future, he accepts his present situation with resignation; more, he even comes to love it and bless it as the best. For he remembers literally the teachings of Jesus. Too often wealth is fatal to its possessors, because it leads to sensuality and the most dangerous passions. . . Having the power of gratifying all his desires, it becomes very difficult for man to resist them. The rich man, who is badly disposed, gives his body every enjoyment, no doubt, but it is at the expense of his soul. He has his paradise upon earth, but he buys it at the price of his eternity. It is impossible to be happy here below and there above. The choice must be made. To have a right to the joys of heaven, earth must be for man a place of trial, a purgatory, where he suffers and merits. Then heaven will be his recompense, and *happiness a good acquired by personal merit*.

The Christian laborer thinks of all this, and, bravely carrying his cross after the example of his divine Saviour, he follows him, saying:

“Patience, my body! the great day of rest and joy will soon come for you in heaven.

“Patience, my heart, patience with your desires and aspirations! In a few years you shall possess the inheritance which the Father of heaven has prepared for His children, and you shall be fully satisfied.”

CHAPTER XXI.

The Human Heart and Its Desires.

Happy in his glorified body, the inhabitant of heaven shall also be happy in his heart and in the affectional faculties of his nature. Yes, in heaven the heart will live, love, and be loved; its desires will be accomplished, its aspirations satisfied; it will be happy.

According to the popular idea, the heart is the hearth whence desires, like the sun's rays, are unceasingly going forth to seek afar whatsoever pleases them; it is also the seat of the affections, the center of life, of the happy influence which man exercises around him; it is the heart especially which gives him his full value.

This is the reason :—God, who is love, says St. John, decided also by love upon the act of creation. He wished to communicate to His intelligent creatures the treasures of His divine nature, and so make them share in His felicity. He made man in His image and likeness, and, according to the beautiful ex-

pression of Bossuet, "the first quality which He put into him was goodness."

Goodness, that is to say, the charity which spends itself, the love which sheds around it treasures of tenderness, and which, in return, seeks to be loved. The heart of man receives this spark of the divine love, which is at once his joy and his torment upon earth. More than any other of the powers of his soul, this particular one desires happiness; more than any other, too, it understands a beatitude which shall fulfil all his desires, and respond to all his wishes.

The Basis of Society.

God made man eminently social, when He gave him a heart which has need of expansion and of sympathy. He enjoys his pleasures but little alone; he seeks to communicate them to others. But he finds it still harder to bear sufferings of body and soul alone. Isolation increases his pain, whilst kind words, the sympathy of loving hearts, make him stronger and more resigned.

The heart is made for happiness, and we must acknowledge with thanksgiving that God has abundantly given us honest and lawful pleasures to render it happy. The pleasures of social life, the sweetness of friendship, the still more intimate family affections,—all these are sources in which

the heart of man may quench its thirst for happiness. Society, with its numerous and varied pleasures, with its exuberance of life and activity, its religious and national holidays, increases in man the power of enjoying what is beautiful, and loving what is good ; it enlarges more and more the horizon of his intellect and of his heart.

Joys of social life, happy gatherings of friends, intimate sweetness of the domestic hearth,—how many delightful hours do you give us upon earth ; how much pleasure do you hold in reserve for the heart of man even in this vale of tears !

The Society Which God Has Willed.

And yet, society, as we now see it, is but the disfigured and scarcely recognizable image of the truly happy society, which God destined for the sons of Adam.

The divine plan was magnificent.

In heaven the celestial hierarchy composed the court of the great King ; their numberless tribes, endowed with the most splendid gifts, unceasingly offered him their homage and adoration.

A little below the angelic world was ranged the second family of God, the human world. Less brilliant than the first, it, nevertheless, enjoyed rare privileges,—innocence, perfect beauty, unfailing health, which knew neither

suffering nor death. God had given it, as its temporary country, the earth adorned with flowers, and producing of itself all that was necessary for existence, or that could give pure and innocent joy to the heart of man. Men, united by the sweet bonds of universal charity, were to love each other as brothers, and to enjoy in common the goods with which the Creator had so bountifully provided them. To increase this pleasure, the angelic world was lovingly inclined towards the world of men; the blessed spirits took pleasure in conversing with their brethren of earth, their future fellow-citizens in the heavenly country. They often visited the terrestrial paradise to hold converse with our first parents. Moreover, God Himself loved to visit His children, increasing their joy, and sustaining their hope.

After having lived that life for a greater or less time, man, without passing through death, was to be admitted to the direct vision of God and the possession of heavenly goods. He would then have been eternally blessed.

Such was the divine plan. Sin destroyed it; it ruined the order which reigned in creation, and greatly modified the harmonious relations which existed between earth and the superior worlds. God, offended, retired into his kingdom; the angels ceased to visit the earth as friends and brothers. Guilty man

was left alone here below with his regrets and his remorse ; alone with the suffering which was about to assail him, and with death, which was to deal him one day the fatal blow ; alone, in fine, with nature, henceforth armed against him, and with passions unchained, which were to prove his most implacable enemies. His sole consolation was the promise of a Redeemer, who should one day rehabilitate the degraded human race.

The decadence of man was followed by a sad revolution in the social order. Uncontrolled passions soon tended to efface, one after the other, the great and beautiful outlines of the divine plan.

Charity, the primitive basis of society, was replaced by egotism, which, relying upon the law of the strongest, gave free rein to the worst instincts of our nature. Presently the earth offered, so to say, an anticipatory image of hell ; society was simply an assemblage of executioners and victims.

Whilst the great of the earth gave themselves up to unbridled excesses of pride and sensuality, the humble, the weak, the vanquished of life,—that is to say, the mass of men,—groaned under the tyranny of the most monstrous slavery.

Slavery in Ancient Times.

Christian workingmen, you know not, now that Christianity has overthrown that old pagan world, what, amid the most brilliant civilization of Greece and Rome, was the condition of those who are now called the proletariat, the laboring classes, but who then were slaves.

Now these slaves were more numerous than the free citizens, their masters. If certain authors are to be believed, in Attica, in Greece, there were 20,000 free citizens, who enjoyed civil rights, and 400,000 slaves of both sexes and of every age, counting those of the free strangers.

Sparta had 36,000 citizens, and 240,000 slaves; Corinth, 160,000 slaves. In Rome they were so numerous that a special law forbade their being counted, lest, seeing their strength, they should attempt to throw off the yoke which had been imposed upon them. They formed half of the population.

The citizens composed a small nobility, nothing more, only they gave their blood for their country. But they despised manual labor.

“The Greeks and the Egyptians,” says the historian, Herodotus, “as well as the Thracians, Scythians, and Persians, gave the lowest rank in their esteem to citizens who had

learned the mechanical arts.” (See Allard, *Esclaves et Serfs*, p. 10.)

“The labor of artisans is debasing,” said Cicero. Therefore the free citizens esteemed it unworthy of them to apply themselves thereunto, considering it as the portion of the slaves. These latter worked under the blows of the surveyors’ whips, or even under threat of death, for, before Nero and Adrian, the master was sole judge of his slaves, and had absolute power of life and death over them.

But, whatever the hapless slave suffered in body, he had to endure yet more in his heart and in the dignity of his manhood. The marriage of free men, with its titles and civil rights, was forbidden him; in fact, the sweetness of the domestic hearth was often denied to him altogether. The children born in those unions permitted by the consent of the master, belonged to the master. According to the letter of the old laws, or rather by reason of their silence, the master could, at will, sell the children with their mother, although custom and jurisprudence usually prevented this dispersion of the slave family. In the liquidation of estates the slave was counted amongst implements of labor. In the religious life, his very presence sufficed at times to contaminate the offerings made to the gods.

Thus, deprived of all that constitutes the pride and joy of the heart upon earth, without any permanent home, too often without present consolation or future hope, millions of slaves hastened toward the grave as toward their deliverance. Sometimes even, following the teaching and example of free men, of the sages of paganism, gloomy and hopeless, these unfortunates sought in suicide the end of so unendurable an existence.

Jesus and His Mission.

Jesus, our divine Saviour, came to re-establish society upon its primitive basis. He restored, as far as the actual condition of men would permit, the beauty and the charm of primeval days. He brought back to earth the sweet law of charity, so long banished thence. He transformed the slave into a free man, and gave him back his human dignity; he made the workingman, equal before God, to the powerful and rich, because both one and the other have the same Father in heaven, on earth the same means of salvation, and the same last end to attain by their personal efforts. From these divine principles germinated slowly the abolition of slavery, and freedom for all.

Jesus, it is true, left to labor its expiatory character; but he rehabilitated and ennobled

it by being the first to subject himself to it. What Christian workingman can complain of his lot, when he remembers that Jesus shared it at Nazareth for thirty years, with Mary and Joseph,—that he had himself a trade, and gained his bread by the sweat of his brow, as a carpenter?

But Jesus especially poured his divine balm into hearts cruelly afflicted by pagan egotism, when he made justice and charity the laws which were henceforth to regulate the relations of Christians unto each other.

Christian Society.

Wherever the Saviour was accepted as a law-giver, societies were gradually founded, which approached as nearly as possible to the divine plan, respected the dignity of man, gave peace to his heart by securing for him an humble but solid happiness. Christians, who had once more become brothers, treated him not only with justice, but with cordial benevolence; the rich came to the assistance of the poor, the great and powerful were lovingly inclined toward the weaker, charity the most divine, reigned everywhere.

Under the influence of Christ, the family regained its primal stability; it became once more the asylum of peace and happiness; the

Christian woman recovered her dignity ; she was the companion and friend of man, consoling him in his trials, encouraging him in the struggle of life, putting joy and sunshine into his existence.

Heaven was reconciled with earth. In our Catholic towns and villages, Jesus has his house, where he receives his children and converses with them, heart to heart, as God did of old with our first parents. The angels of heaven, the saints of Paradise, who have become once more our friends, assist us and love us.

That is what Jesus did for man. In society, subject to his paternal authority, he gave to the human heart all the joys which can render it happy. Thenceforth the life of the Christian laborer has flowed on calm and happy, sheltered from the great passions and the great catastrophes of earth.

He peacefully enjoys the lawful pleasures which Jesus has reconquered for him, the society of friends, the sincere and lasting affection of his wife and little ones. Religious festivals console and encourage him. The church has multiplied them to this very end ; she desires that the Christian workingman should often raise his eyes to heaven,—his country,—and remember the magnificent promises which Jesus has made him.

Gratitude and love, then, to the Saviour

who has restored to us the sweetness of Christian society. But, dear as they may be to the heart, they nevertheless give us but an imperfect idea of the joys which await us in the society of heaven.

CHAPTER XXII.

Joys of the Human Heart in the Heavenly Country.

Social Life in Heaven.

Theologians,—amongst the rest, St. Thomas,—tell us that the human heart shall preserve in heaven all the lawful affections which God put into it upon earth, and that these affections shall contribute to the secondary happiness of the elect. We may conclude, then, that the human heart shall enjoy social life in heaven, as it does here below.

Is not this what our Lord meant when He compared heaven to a kingdom? Did He not tell us that social life would be the very essence of our true country? Furthermore, to increase its joys, he will remove those obstacles which on earth were opposed to the perfection of society, or which interfered with its beauty and its power of pleasing.

Here, the present conditions of our existence permit us to have social relations with but a limited number of our fellow beings; the rest are strangers, are unknown to us, people with whom we shall never have any communication. It will not be thus in that blessed country.

In Heaven There Will Be No Strangers.

“The kingdom of God is heaven,” says Cardinal Bellarmine. “The difference between the kingdom of heaven and those of earth is that, in the latter, an infinity of people have no inter-communication, and pass their whole lives without seeing or knowing each other; in the former, on the contrary, all see each other, all know each other, all live together familiarly, as brothers, sisters, intimate friends.

“Therefore, the Scripture gives to heaven not only the name of a kingdom, but also that of a city, to make us understand that the inhabitants of that kingdom, vast as is its extent, are as united amongst themselves as are the citizens of the same city.

“Moreover, to show us that the blessed are at once fellow-citizens of the saints, and belong to the family of God, the Holy Ghost sometimes calls a house, what is at other times designated as a town or city. In fine, because all the elect shall enjoy the same delights in

heaven, he names it also Paradise.” (Goodness of the Saints. Preface.)

The saints render the same testimony.

“To just souls,” says St. Athanasius, “God grants a great good, that of knowing each other.” (Quest. ad ant., 922.)

“Let us believe, my friends,” says St. Theodore, “let us still believe, let us always believe, that we shall rise again; that we shall be incorruptible; that we shall know each other, as our first parents knew each other in the terrestrial paradise. . . . Yes, we must believe it; the brother shall know the sister, the father his child, the husband his wife, the friend his friend, . . . all, in fine, shall know each other, in order that the habitation of God may be rendered more joyful by this benefit added to so many others.”

In Heaven, No Passions.

In heaven, no more passions; none of those violent and disorderly inclinations of the heart, which, in pursuing a supposed good, clashes with opposing wills, or encounters insurmountable obstacles, which discourage it, and lead it to despair.

In heaven, no more opposing interests, or those contests of ambition, which arm men one against the other, and turn them into bitter enemies; no more of those haughty distinctions between different classes of soci-

ety, those barriers which separate the rich from the poor, the wise from the ignorant, and so produce pride and ostentation above, jealousy, envy, and hatred below.

In heaven, divine charity will communicate itself from the heart of Jesus to the hearts of His elect. It will preserve perfect harmony in the affections, and realize the ideal of a happy family, wherein all the children, though in different conditions, are fully satisfied. Each in his place shall feel himself beloved by the common Father, and shall be happy.

The miserable passions of head and heart, which impair the beauty of our present society, shall have disappeared. Daughters of hell, they shall return to their original country, and shall have no further action upon the hearts of the saints. Heaven will be the kingdom of peace, the country of universal harmony. God will secure to its fortunate inhabitants the sweetness of social life, without any alloy of bitterness.

Society of the Saints in Heaven.

Let us penetrate in spirit to the holy city, and endeavor to form some idea of the joys which it offers to its fortunate citizens.

In the center of the blessed city, full of glory and of goodness, is seen the King and Father of the saints, our Lord Jesus Christ

Himself, presiding over the happiness of His children. The love which He feels for the children of men shall henceforth find a faithful, never-lessening echo in their hearts.

The veil of faith has been withdrawn. Supreme goodness and beauty are revealed to the ravished eyes of the elect; and, as an irresistible lodestone, it has drawn towards it all the affections of the heart, which are never more to be withdrawn from it. In possessing the supreme beatitude, does not the heart possess all that can fulfil its desires and the aspirations of its nature?

The greater the new beauties which it discovers in God, the greater the gifts it receives, and the more its gratitude increases towards its benefactor, its love for its Father.

What shall we say of the relations of the blessed with each other in Paradise? Sometimes, on earth, we meet men, who appear to have a magical charm for gaining hearts and making themselves beloved. Their conversation captivates and enchants; the grace of their manner, the lovable sympathy of their character, everything about them, attracts and pleases. It would be happiness to live always in company so sweet and agreeable. The saints, more than any others here below, possessed this delightful power of fascination. A sort of heavenly radiance shone in their countenances, a divine

fragrance seemed to exhale from their conversation and their persons; none ever wearied of seeing and listening to them.

The seraphic Francis of Assisi inspired the people with so great an enthusiasm that they followed his path, as of old the multitudes hung upon the footsteps of the Son of God; they accompanied him through the fair countries of Italy, and joined with him in the song of love, which he sang to the whole creation.

Who was ever proof against the heavenly gentleness of Francis de Sales, his so gracious lovableness, his heart full of a divine sweetness.

Even in our own days, have we not seen a poor country priest, the holy Curé d'Ars, renew these same wonders? Day and night an eager crowd pressed around his pulpit or confessional, wishing to hear unceasingly the gentle, consoling words of that man of God, and to remain forever in that little village, which seemed to have become a corner of Paradise.

If the society of a single saint is so full of charm here on earth, what will be the society of all the saints assembled in Paradise?

The humblest of the elect shall live familiarly with all the greatest and most lovable characters of earth. He shall see the apostles of Jesus, the great martyrs of the Church,

the doctors, the confessors, the virgins; he shall know the illustrious men of the Old Testament, the prophets, patriarchs, the father of the human race; he shall take pleasure in the conversation of the princes and princesses of the heavenly court; he will enjoy the charms of their society, without the slightest feeling of that constraint which the consciousness of our ignorance and our inferiority now causes in our relations with the wise or great of earth.

In heaven, the greatest cordiality, the most fraternal good-will, shall exist among the children of the family of God.

The Human World and the Angelic World.

The social relations of heaven shall not be restricted to the human race alone, but shall extend also to the angelic world.

“In this eternal felicity,” says St. Francis de Sales, “the blessed shall have . . . the clear vision of the cherubim, seraphim, thrones, dominations, virtues, powers, principalities, archangels, and angels, who compose the nine choirs of the heavenly spirits, divided into three hierarchies, amongst which the saints will be placed according to their merits.”

They will treat the sons of Adam as fellow citizens and brothers. Angels and men shall not form two distinct families, but one and the

same family; they shall converse together, together they shall love the same Father, and together they shall sing to him their songs of love and allegiance.

“Can anything more agreeable be imagined,” says Bellarmine, “than to live eternally amongst so gracious and so numerous a company? How sweet to enjoy the sight and the converse of so vast a number of angels and illustrious men, with whom a common happiness is shared!

“If a single angel were to show himself to us in all his beauty and glory, who would not run to look at him? If one of the prophets, one of the apostles or doctors of the Church, were to come down from heaven to-day, how we should delight in listening to him!

“Who would not be charmed to hear, not one prophet, nor one apostle, nor one doctor, but all the doctors, all the prophets, all the apostles, and to converse with them eternally?” (Goodness of the Saints, Book II, ch. II.)

Society of Jesus and Mary.

The greatest joy of the elect in heaven will certainly be to live in intimacy with Jesus and His divine Mother. No doubt they shall hail Mary with transport as Queen of the heavenly city; but they shall specially rejoice to give her the sweet name of mother; and

Mary, in her turn, will call them her children, and will love them as the best of mothers loves her dearest son.

Here below, the remembrance of a mother is always man's sweetest memory, and that which is most consoling to his heart. It recalls the affection which has been most constant, and brings back to him the atmosphere of tenderness and self-sacrifice, which surrounded the early years of his life. Never since has his heart opened to any one as to that woman who was his mother. Never has he loved as he loved then.

With what simple confidence did he pour out all his feelings into the maternal bosom, joy and sadness, hope and discouragement. How eagerly did he gather up the words which fell from his mother's lips. What peace, what courage, she put into his soul.

In the battle of life, in the hour of trial and cruel affliction, when his soul seems overwhelmed by a flood of discouragement and despair, suddenly, from the depths of his heart, arises the sweet image of his mother. Her clear gaze makes light amid the surrounding darkness; her voice recalls the wise counsels of other days; peace and consolation once more take possession of his soul.

Ah, if her maternal love had been powerful enough to transform desires into realities, what a fair existence, all happiness and sunshine,

would she have secured for the child of her love !

In heaven, each one of the elect shall find in Mary, a mother still more loving than the most tender of earthly mothers. It is hard for us to understand such a love, because the capacity of the human heart is limited, and, whatever may be its devotedness, it exhausts itself in giving. But it shall not be thus in our true country. The love of Mary will pour itself out inexhaustibly upon all the elect, who shall be her children. She will love each of them as a mother loves her only son, and to each of them she will open all the treasures of her maternal heart.

In heaven, in fine, Jesus will live familiarly with his saints as a father lives amongst his children.

How great was the happiness of the apostles who enjoyed three years of intimacy with the Son of God ! But a thousand times greater will be the felicity of the blessed then, when they see Him face to face,—see Him, the most beautiful and the most amiable of the children of men,—when they hear His sweet words, when they love Him and are by him beloved, and that not for a few years, but for all eternity.

O happiness of heaven, brilliant society of that fair country ! With what joys shall the heart of the blessed be inundated !

“What tongue can tell,” exclaimed St. Gregory the Great, “what intelligence can express, the greatness of the joys of the heavenly city?”

“To have the angelic choirs for fellow-citizens, to partake with these blessed spirits in the glory of the Creator, to contemplate the face of God, to behold his limitless splendor, to have no farther fear of death, to enjoy the blessings of immortality!

“Yes, yes; in hearkening to these magnificent promises, the heart begins to long to be already in the heavenly country, and in the enjoyment of endless happiness.”

But let us remind ourselves of the condition :

“But we shall only attain this great reward by great labors. Therefore Paul, most excellent of preachers, tells us that he alone shall gain the reward who has fought the good fight.

“Therefore, while always thinking of the greatness of the reward, let us not be afraid of the fatigue of the contest.” (Hom. xxxvii., in Evang.)

CHAPTER XXIII.

The Festivals of the Heart.

Earthly Festivals.

The earth has its festival days, to permit the heart to expand and give free vent to its sentiments,—family festivals, religious and national festivals,—happy resting-places on the weary road of life.

Upon those days we eagerly throw off the harness of misery and forget our pains and cares, our speculations and our affairs, to think only of one thing, living and being happy.

Every one has need of these breathing places,—the poor and the rich, the laborer and the man who only appreciates time at its money value. The law is universal, everywhere. The heart enforces its rights and makes them respected. Are not these earthly festivals,—too brief, alas,—and too rare,—a far-off memory of the days when life was a continual holiday? Are they not also a proof of the natural aspirations of the human heart toward a happiness which the sad reality of the morrow cannot destroy?

Family Festivals.

How delightful are those festivals which children, in their happy simplicity, celebrate in honor of their father and mother. They prepare for them long before in secret, waiting with impatience the coming of the great day. At length, it has arrived. How joyfully do they throw their arms around their mother's neck! How great is their happiness, when they tell her how much they love her, while presenting their little holiday gifts and offering her a bouquet of flowers to express their gratitude and love! How gaily do those young hearts join in the chorus, to which their parents listen with delighted ears, and how these proofs of affection seem to compensate them for all their labors!

Then parents and children seat themselves around a table plentifully served, and where some unaccustomed sweetmeat, a favor from the mother, increases the pleasure of the happy guests.

National Feasts.

Another family also claims the right to speak to the human heart and cause it to thrill with the most noble sentiments. That family is our country,—our country, which loves to celebrate the glorious anniversaries of her history. She has her festivals for those who fall on the field of battle

defending the national honor. She organizes triumphal processions for the victor who returns, after having repulsed the enemy and secured peace and security to his fellow-citizens. She honors great men, who, by their labors or their discoveries, contribute to the common prosperity. In fine, she chooses one day in each year when all the citizens, in a national festival, renew the assurance of their affection and loyalty to the sovereign.

More imposing than family festivals, these holidays of our country enlarge the heart by appealing to the loftiest sentiments, unite fellow-citizens amongst themselves, and increase the love of native land.

When the standard which symbolizes honor and love of country waves over public buildings; when triumphal arches and floral decorations are everywhere seen; when the notes of military bands are mingled with the ringing of bells and the still more majestic voice of cannon; when the citizens, in holiday attire, fill the streets of the capital, hailing with their patriotic acclamations the procession of the sovereign, advancing in all the pomp of his majesty;—then joy beams on every face and all hearts seem overflowing with it. Each individual feels happy in his own happiness, and happy also in that of others.

Religious Feasts.

But of all the festivals which rejoice the heart, none attain that end so fully as solemn religious feasts, by the touching memories which they evoke and the consoling hopes which they recall. No, nothing so rejoices the heart as a church festival,—the anniversary of the birth of our Saviour, the day of his glorious triumph over death, the feasts in honor of the Virgin Mary, and of those great saints who labored so heroically for the glory of God and the salvation of their brethren.

Then, our Mother employs all the resources of art and of nature to rejoice the hearts of her children. She adorns herself with the richest ornaments; she covers her altars with flowers; everywhere she displays garlands of light and verdure. She organizes choirs, and their songs of joy uplift the soul and make it forget the miseries of life.

And Christians, raising their minds to the paternal country, think of the splendor of the heavenly festivals, which find an echo in these feasts of earth. How beautiful must be Christmas day in heaven! With what gratitude must the elect unite their voices with those of the angels, repeating the joyous song of Bethlehem: "Glory be to God in the highest heavens, and peace on earth to men

of good will. We praise Thee, O Lord, we bless Thee, we adore Thee. Glory be to God in the highest heavens."

On Easter day, with what enthusiasm must the immense multitude of the redeemed salute their Liberator. How joyfully must the alleluias of the angels and saints respond to the alleluias of earth!

Festivals in Heaven.

Is the human heart deceived in thus associating heaven with its religious joys? Shall our true country be deprived of those family festivals so dear to the heart? Shall it ever fail to remind Jesus of the anniversaries of His birth, His victory over death, and His love for men? Shall it forget to celebrate the glories and privileges of Mary, Mother of the elect? Shall it not salute the martyrs on the day of their triumph; sing hymns of gratitude to the great saints, those mighty and peaceful conquerors,—the Brunos, Benedicts, Francis of Assisis, Dominics, Ignatius de Loyolas, Francis Xaviers, Francis de Sales,—who brought multitudes to heaven, conquered by their labors and their zeal?

What! No festivals in heaven! But who, then, for a single instant, can entertain such an idea? In heaven, as upon earth, the heart shall feel the need of publicly proclaiming its love and happiness. Oh, yes! Heaven shall

have its family festivals, when parents and children, newly reunited in their true country, shall be filled with affection greater than that which they bore each other upon earth. There shall be also religious and national festivals, to celebrate heroes, and to thank Jesus and Mary for the touching proofs of their love for men. Heaven preserves the heart's memories, and those memories are expressed by festivals and acclamations of joy.

It might more truly be said that heaven will be a perpetual festival of the heart, varying its homage, diversifying its joys and pleasures, but knowing no interruption to its happiness, no tomorrow to its heavenly joys.

But, has not Holy Church already begun here below that perpetual festival of the heart, which shall be continued one day in the heavenly country? Does she not invite her children every day to celebrate the mysteries of Jesus and of Mary,—presenting to their homage, martyrs, confessors, virgins, all the saints who are already in possession of eternal happiness?

When time shall be no more, and the entire Church shall be triumphant in the true country, the songs of joy shall still be heard, for the heart will not be silent.

On the contrary, angels and men, in a common brotherhood, shall vie with each

other in celebrating the glories of Jesus and Mary. They shall have the most splendid festivals to express their joy at living in the bosom of eternal beatitude.

A Heavenly Festival Described by the Apostle St. John.

The Apostle St. John beheld one of these festivals of the heavenly country, and he describes it in the following terms :

“Immediately,” says he, “I was in the spirit, and behold, there was a throne set in heaven, and upon the throne one sitting. . . .

“And there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.

“And round about that throne were four and twenty seats ; and upon the seats four and twenty ancients sitting, clothed in white garments, and on their heads were crowns of gold. . . .

“The four and twenty ancients fell down before Him that sitteth on the throne, and adored Him that liveth forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying :

“Thou art worthy, O Lord our God, to receive glory, and honor, and power, because Thou hast created all things, and for Thy will they were and have been created. . . .

. . . “And the four and twenty ancients fell down before the Lamb, having, every one of them, harps and golden vials full of odors. . .

“And they sung a new canticle, saying :

Thou art worthy, O Lord, to take the book and to open the seals thereof; because Thou wast slain and hast redeemed us. . . .

. . . "And hast made us to our God a kingdom and priests; and we shall reign on the earth.

"And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, . . . and the ancients, and the number of them was thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice:

"The Lamb, that was slain, is worthy to receive power, and divinity, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and benediction.

"And every creature, which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them,—I heard all saying:

"To Him that sitteth on the throne and to the Lamb, benediction, and honor, and glory, and power, forever and ever. . . .

"And the four and twenty ancients fell down on their faces, and adored Him that liveth forever and ever." (Apoc. iv and v.)

CHAPTER XXIV.

The Family on Earth and in Heaven.

In the midst of the great society of cities, with their commercial and social relations, the heart of man longs for another companionship, less widely extended, and belonging more intimately to himself; one to which may be confided the most secret joys and the most cherished thoughts. It needs the sweetness of domestic life.

It is only at the home-hearth that the heart fully expands; there alone it displays its treasures and pours out its tenderness; there it experiences a happiness the most exquisite and the most lasting.

When the blue sky of domestic life is unobscured by clouds, when the hearts of father and mother beat as one, and the children grow up around their parents, giving ever fresh token of their innocent affection, filling the house with cheerful talk and joyous laughter, man is happy. He finds rest and enjoyment in his home.

The angels of heaven, witnessing this happiness, smile lovingly upon their earthly charges, and beg of God to prolong their joy.

Happiness Destroyed.

Alas, the earth is a place of expiation, a land of suffering. Happiness can never find a permanent abode there, and the day which breaks in brilliant sunlight often ends in darkness and storm.

Upon the threshold of that peaceful asylum, that household wherein joy reigns supreme, the dread visitor appears. He changes the laughter to tears, the songs of joy into mourning and lamentation. The Angel of Death has come to claim a victim.

A cruel visitation, a soul-rending trial for the human heart, which thus learns, by sad experience, the mystery of suffering. It is the time when the tribute is paid to divine justice of tears and of sorrow, exacted from every man who comes into the world. It is the hour wherein, by an humble and resigned submission to the inscrutable will of God, man engraves upon his soul the mysterious seal of the cross, which shall one day prove his right to an eternal reward.

All men have known such sorrowful hours; they have, at least, assisted as witnesses, sympathizing but powerless, at these great trials of the human heart. They have seen a little angel of earth, full of grace and beauty, take its flight to heaven; or youths and maidens, the pride of families, the hope

and consolation of aged parents, stricken down in the spring-tide of life. Everything was smiling to them, and they, in return, smiled upon everything. The dreams of their twenty years were so beautiful, the hopes of their young hearts so brilliant! Behold, all has vanished as smoke. In the very flower of their age, they bade farewell to everything, and crossed the mysterious threshold of eternity.

They have seen a mother bending over her dying child, watching with terrified eyes the progress of slowly approaching death, still hoping against hope, striving by her prayers and vows, by all the love of a mother's heart, to keep that soul, which was about to take its flight to God. And, when death has done its work, and the mother's arms hold only the lifeless body of her beloved child, they have heard the piercing cry of sorrow which escaped from the maternal heart,—truly the agonized outpouring of a heart which death had broken. Striking the child, it had stricken the mother, dealing a blow which nothing on earth could ever heal.

O Death, how cruel is thy mission! How fearful the sacrifices thou dost demand of the human heart! When they behold the happiness of a day changed into the inconsolable grief of the morrow, the angels of heaven

must surely experience an intense compassion for the sons of guilty Adam. What possible consolation can there be for such sorrow? What balm can be poured on hearts so sorely wounded? Human words fail and feel their own impotence in presence of such affliction.

Consolation of the Family in Heaven.

But, behold, from the vastness of eternity a voice is heard. It explains the mystery of that painful separation; it speaks words which are touching in their power to lessen at least the bitterness of pain, and to bring hope to the heart.

Be consoled, O Christian mother, O afflicted parents! Dry your tears. Your child is dead to earth, it is true; but it lives in God. . . . It is not lost to you; the separation shall be but for a few years. Soon you shall find the son or daughter for whom you now weep. You shall see that child once more in your true country; you shall know it, and press it again lovingly to your heart. You shall live in its company, in the enjoyment of a common happiness, and you shall no longer have to fear separation.

The family shall be united once more in heaven. The mutual relations of its members, so sweet in former days, shall be resumed, but with an intensity of affection,

which earth could never know, and which shall be in itself one of the greatest of heavenly rewards.

How efficacious are such promises to alleviate, if they cannot heal, present sorrow, and to soften the blow, by causing it to be accepted with resignation !

The Family Reunited in Heaven.

But are these promises certain ? Catholic tradition authorizes the belief that the family shall be reunited in heaven, and that its members shall love each other with an affection distinct from that which they bear to the other elect, and at once more intimate and more tender.

The teaching of Catholic doctors upon this point is as follows :

“The law of charity,” say they, “shall reign supreme in heaven ; the elect shall love God with all their hearts, and love each other as brothers. Nevertheless, this universal charity will not destroy the heart’s preferences, nor sever those closer bonds of other days, which were the outcome of friendship or of kindred. All the blessed in heaven will love each other, but they will not all love each other in the same manner.”

“In heaven,” says St. Thomas, “each soul shall retain a special affection for those to whom it was united upon earth, and shall

continue to love them in various ways, by reason of relationship, friendship, marriage, benefits conferred or received, a common nationality, or similarity of vocation. For motives of lawful preference shall not cease to influence the hearts of the blessed.”

In another passage, he declares that—“God shall not destroy any of those pure and legitimate affections which He Himself put into the human heart, and which, like fragrant flowers, sweetened our lives by their gentle aroma.”

Parents and Children.

Now, family affection unquestionably holds the first rank amongst these legitimate attachments. God Himself implanted it in the parental heart. It is the source of maternal devotion, and of the self-abnegation of a father, who courageously and perseveringly spends his strength in gaining, not only a livelihood for his family, but a larger share in the happiness of life.

In the same manner God fills the hearts of children with love and gratitude, drawing them towards their parents as young plants are attracted to the sun, which gives them life and heat.

In fine, the good offices of those who were related by other degrees of kindred, and the happiness which they added to earlier years,

give them a special claim to a particular affection. For thus are formed those bonds of mutual love, which, in the midst of society at large, constitute distinct groups, which are known as families.

Death shall not put an end to relations so pure and so legitimate, and heaven shall one day sanctify them by giving the highest perfection of which they are capable. This is the reward promised to parents as a compensation for the sacrifices which domestic duties demand from them upon earth.

Yes, Christian parents, your children, gathered about you in the heavenly country, shall form your crown of glory. Fully understanding then your present devotion to them; appreciating, at its just value, the education which has enabled them to know God and love His holy name, they will thank you and love you unceasingly in heaven.

Heaven shall be the country of gratitude, and the payment of a debt of gratitude is always a happiness;—it is love.

But another proof of so consoling a promise is found in the fact that the church declares with absolute certainty that, in heaven, we shall see, know, and love each other.

In the missal there is a prayer to be said during mass by the priest, for a deceased father or mother. Now what does the church

ask? Is it simply eternal happiness for that father or mother? Is it simply that the son may know his parents are in heaven and that he may be there likewise himself some day? No, that would not be sufficient; the father and the son, the mother and the child, must continue the family life in heaven. To be perfectly happy they must *see* each other.

“O God, who hast commanded us to honor our father and mother, mercifully show pity to the soul of my father and my mother, and forgive them their sins; and grant that I may *see* them in the joys of eternal life.”

“What the church says of the father, the mother, the child, she says also of the husband or wife. She declares that their mutual love shall continue in heaven, under a higher form and with a greater tenderness.” (Bougaud, *le Chretien*, vol. I, p. 254.)

Farewell, to Meet Again in Heaven.

That last word which is spoken at the moment of final separation expresses, then, a most consoling truth. Farewell, till we meet in our common country, till we meet again in heaven!

In heaven, we shall see each other once more, and love each other still better than we have done upon earth. In heaven, we shall be united in a life of happiness, which shall be eternal.

Farewell, to meet again in heaven. These words find an echo in the ear and heart of man, when his journey has extended to the distant boundaries of old age. Pursuing the path of life, he has seen the gay companions of youth fall one by one, the friends of riper years sink to rest in the grave, taking with them his heart's best affections. So that the man of declining years may still have many acquaintances. But, alas! he has neither relatives nor friends left upon earth;—all have gone before him into eternity.

The old man is left alone, isolated in the midst of that new generation, which has taken the place of his own. He is an exile, forgotten upon an alien shore in the hurry of departure.

His sole consolation thenceforth, is to visit frequently in spirit the friends and kindred who await him in heaven, and to say to himself: "Soon, I, too, will set out upon the great journey. Soon I will keep my tryst with you and the promises we made each other when you left me long ago. Soon I shall see family and friends in heaven. Then we shall be happy forevermore.

CHAPTER XXV.

Testimony of Tradition.

Catholic tradition is unanimous in asserting that we shall know each other in heaven, that relatives and friends shall there renew the pleasant relations of other days.

Tertullian.

“God will no more permit the separation, in eternal life, of those whom he has joined, than he permits it here below. The wife shall be the constant companion of the husband, and he shall possess what is greatest and best in her, the heart.”

Such was the belief in the early ages of the church.

St. Ambrose.

“O my brother,” cried out St. Ambrose, on the death of his brother, Nebridius, “what consolation would remain were it not for the hope of seeing each other soon? Yes, I am consoled, when I reflect that the separation caused by your departure, shall not be of long duration. By your prayers you will obtain the grace that he, who so deeply

mourns you, may be speedily called to you.”
(*de Excessu Fratris*, B. I, II, 70.)

St. Augustine.

“We have not lost those who go out of this world,” cried St. Augustine, to a widow, “but we have sent them into that other life, where they shall be so much the dearer, because better known.” (Epist. 92.)

The same saint most touchingly consoled a young girl, who had just lost a beloved brother. This brother was a deacon in the church at Carthage. His sister, Sapida, had made for him, with her own hands, a tunic, which he had not lived to wear. She sent it to St. Augustine, begging him to make use of it, and the Bishop of Hippo accepted this offering of a broken heart, whilst consoling Sapida with these sweet words:

“Assuredly it is a cause for tears that you shall never more see that brother whom you have so much loved, and who has testified so great a respect for you because of your holy profession of virginity. It is sad, when you see no more your young deacon of the church of Carthage, coming and going in fulfilment of his functions; when you no longer hear his pious and edifying discourse so often addressed to you. The thought of these things pierces the heart, and causes tears to flow like the heart’s blood.

“But the union of Timothy and Sapida still lasts. Timothy still loves you. He is living in spirit, though sleeping in the flesh. But God, who has received his spirit, will give him back his body. There is no room, therefore, for long sadness, since it will give place soon to an eternal joy.” (Epist. 263, Quoted by Father Blot, in his book, “In Heaven We Know Our Own.”)

St. John Chrysostom.

St. John Chrysostom, in a homily on St. Matthew, says to each of his auditors: “You wish to see him, whom death has taken from you. Lead the life which he led along the path of virtue and you shall enjoy that blessed vision.”

On another occasion, he said to a young widow:

“If you desire to see your husband, let purity of life shine in you as it did in him, and be assured that you shall attain to the heavenly choir, which he himself has reached. You shall dwell there with him, not for five years as upon earth, but during endless ages. There you shall find your husband clothed with a splendor and beauty surpassing in brightness the rays of the sun.” (Ad Vid. Jun.)

St. Theodore Studile.

“Yes, I cannot doubt that brother shall recognize brother, the father his children, the husband his wife, the friend his friend. We shall recognize each other, in order that the dwelling of God in us shall be rendered more joyful by a benefit superadded to all others, that of knowing each other.”

He wrote to a widow: “The God who created you, and who Himself united you in youth to a distinguished man, can indeed reunite you on the day of the resurrection. Look upon his departure, then, as though he had gone upon a journey, . . . knowing that you shall possess your husband once more in the day of the Lord.” (Epist. B. I., ch. XXIX.)

Relations With the World Beyond the Tomb.

Are we not also taught this truth by means of those mysterious relations which even now exist between heaven and earth, the living and those who have departed?

Is not the belief that our deepest affections shall be continued beyond the grave confirmed by heavenly apparitions? Parents and the friends of other days shall know each other immediately, shall call each other by name, and resume together the happy relations interrupted by a separation of many years.

One evening, St. Teresa was suffering so

much that she thought mental prayer would be impossible. She took up her rosary to employ it in vocal prayer.

“A few minutes had elapsed,” says she, “when an ecstasy, seizing upon me with irresistible force, carried me out of myself. I was transported in spirit to heaven. The first persons I saw there were my father and my mother, and, in a short space of time, that of a Hail Mary, I beheld innumerable wonders.” (Life of the Saint, chap. xxxviii.)

St. Frances of Rome.

Let us recall the delightful interview of St. Frances of Rome with one of her sons, who was already glorified in the heavenly country.

One morning, as the dawn was about to break, the saint awoke. She raised her heart to God, and her eyes fell upon her daughter, still of tender age, who slept near her.

Suddenly her room was filled with an unwonted light, in the midst of which appeared one of her sons, who had been dead a year. His figure and general appearance were the same as in life, but his beauty was incomparably more ravishing. He was called Evangelista.

This ever loving son approached his mother and saluted her with profound respect and with a charming grace. Frances, transported

by an unspeakable joy, did what most mothers would have done: She extended her arms, eager to press that dear child once more to her heart. And what did she say? What most mothers would have said:

“My son, do you remember your mother in heaven?”

“Oh, my mother,” answered Evangelista, “see how I have thought of you and loved you. Do you not perceive standing beside me another child of beauty superior to mine? He is my companion in the choir of arch-angels, for in heaven I am in the second choir of the lower hierarchy. God is going to leave him with you in place of my little sister Agnes, who shall soon take her flight to heaven to taste eternal joy with me.”

This conversation lasted an hour, and before leaving her the child asked permission of his mother to return to heaven, leaving the archangel with her. (Acts XXXIII, 9th day of March.)

Little Agnes died soon after, but Frances enjoyed during her whole life the visible presence of the archangel.

The Holy Family in Heaven.

Before concluding this chapter, let us turn our eyes toward that blessed family which, on earth or in heaven, shall be the model of all Christian families.

A close affection united Jesus, Mary, and Joseph at Nazareth. Shall not that special affection be continued in heaven? Shall not Mary retain the place of honor beside Jesus which she occupied upon earth? Shall she not feel a mother's affection for him, and shall not Jesus show toward her a filial love and respect?

Shall we not see, side by side with Jesus and Mary, above the other blessed, good St. Joseph, occupying the distinguished place which Providence assigned to him upon earth? There is no change in the cordial relations which united the members of the holy family. It is always the same affection, the same harmony of hearts, the same happiness.

So the earthly families, transported one day into their true country, shall resume together the sweet relations of other days. The mother shall see once again her children gathered around her, to be her crown and glory. Brother shall find brother. The members of the same family shall be united in the same affection, having to fear neither grief nor separation. It shall be happiness and a happiness which shall be eternal.

Let us find courage in the consoling words which St. Cyprian addressed to the faithful of his time :

“Since we journey through this sad world

as strangers and pilgrims, let us sigh for the day which shall bring us back to our home and reinstate us in heaven. Does not the exile long to return to his country? Does not he, who has embarked upon the ocean to return to his kindred, desire favorable winds that he may the sooner embrace his loved ones? Our country is heaven, and our fathers have gone before us there.

“Let us hasten, let us fly to greet them. So many loved ones are waiting for us in heaven; our presence is desired by a great multitude,—parents, brothers, children, who, already certain of their own happiness, are full of anxiety for our salvation.

“Let us go that we may see and embrace them. Ah, what joy for them and for us!”
(de Immort. in fine.)

CHAPTER XXVI.

The Spiritual Family.

The human family shall be formed again in heaven. Its members shall love each other with a distinct and more intimate love. The children shall once more gather about their parents. That shall be the magnificent crown of duties and virtues commanded by God here below. Yes, human paternity shall be sublimely honored in heaven.

But another paternity shall also receive there a reward which earth refuses to it, or but grudgingly accords. I mean the spiritual paternity of those who, through charity and the sacrifice of a whole life, devoted themselves to their neighbors and to bringing forth souls to God.

Spiritual Paternity.

One day our Lord said to the fishermen of Galilee: "Come ye after me, and I will make you to be fishers of men.

"And they, immediately, leaving their nets, followed him." (Matt. iv, 19-20.)

Now, upon another occasion, Jesus spoke to his apostles of the kingdom of his Father

and of its joys, and Peter boldly asked him :

“Behold, we have left all things and have followed thee ; what, therefore, shall we have ?”

And Jesus, answering, said to him :

“Every one that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name’s sake, shall receive an hundred-fold, and shall possess life everlasting.” (Matt. XIX, 27–28.)

For eighteen hundred years the thousands of men and women, invited by Jesus to follow the example of the apostles, have generously made the same sacrifices. They have renounced all domestic joys, the goods of the earth, the lawful pleasures of life, in order to devote themselves entirely to the service of souls and the relief of the unfortunate. But what signifies then, in their regard, those words of Jesus : “You shall receive an hundred-fold ?” What reward do they receive here below ? They enjoy, it is true, peace of heart and the consolation of a good conscience, but that is only the promise of happiness, at most the absence of those causes of suffering, fear and remorse ; it is not happiness itself.

The father of a family sees around him his children, who respect and love him. He enjoys their society, he daily receives some

token of their gratitude and love ; in heaven, he is certain of possessing the same privilege.

The man who is consecrated to God has none of these consolations upon earth. Shall he be still deprived of them in heaven ? Shall he be destined to a solitary happiness in the heavenly country ? No, most certainly that shall not be the case.

Reward of Apostolic Zeal.

Eternal life reserves a magnificent reward for him. There he shall receive the hundred fold promised by the Saviour to apostolic men.

When a general returns, victorious, to his country, his fellow-citizens eagerly flock to meet him with acclamations and congratulations, offering him every possible token of love and admiration. For, has he not rendered them the greatest of services in securing to them the peaceful possession of their goods, the peace and honor of their country ?

How great then shall be, in heaven, the glory of those mighty saviours of souls, who, by their apostolic labors, have secured the possession of eternal goods to thousands and thousands of men !

What a splendid religious family shall gather about the founders of orders—Bruno, Francis of Assisi, Dominic, Ignatius-Loyola, Francis de Sales, Teresa, and Vincent de

Paul! The children whom they have formed to the religious life by their wise counsels and the examples of their lives, shall be reunited around their beloved fathers in heaven, forming a most numerous and most loving family.

Above all, how great shall be the gratitude towards these apostles of truth of the millions of men they have saved, when these latter shall have compared the joys of heaven with the horrible torments which would most certainly have awaited them in hell, had it not been for these generous souls. How great their thankfulness, how deep their love for those, who, after God, have been the instruments of their salvation!

Reward of Charity.

More humble, no doubt, but of the same nature shall be the reward of all those, who, through charity, have labored for the salvation of their brethren. The missionary, who left country and friends to take up his abode among heathen and barbarous tribes, where, without friends or kindred, often even without material resources, he consumes his whole life in toil and suffering. For a great hope sustains him. The poor savages whom he baptizes and sends to heaven shall surround him one day, full of gratitude, and shall love him as a father. Therefore, what matters his

present isolation, death itself, on this foreign shore? Shall not eternity compensate the valiant apostle of Jesus an hundred-fold for all his sacrifices?

The same hope sustains the pastor, the priest, who, according to the touching expression of the church, is given the charge of souls. His life in the country is often very monotonous, and his earthly horizon very limited. The hope of obtaining a more important or more agreeable charge never, perhaps, becomes a reality. Still, he accepts with a brave heart the humble position assigned him. Yes, he passes his whole life amongst his villagers, instructing, consoling, and leading them along the way to eternity.

When he accompanies the mortal remains of one of his parishioners to the cemetery his consolation shall be to say: "Still another soul which I have delivered well prepared into the hands of Jesus. I have labored to bring this soul into the path of righteousness, to sanctify him; he owes his salvation and his glory in great part to me; he will be grateful to me in heaven."

Religious Vocations.

Is it not once more this hope which induces so many men and women to embrace the religious life, and, in cloisters, hospitals,

and orphanages, to devote themselves to the charitable care of their neighbor?

The world cannot understand these heroic vocations; its intellect cannot fathom their secrets. It seeks to explain them by frivolous human reasons,—disappointments in life, sorrows of the heart, cruel deceptions,—as if such reasons could make men and women accept for long years the mortified existence of the cloister, which is contrary to every natural aspiration. God may sometimes, I admit, make use of these secondary causes to lead a soul to desire goods which are more solid and more lasting; but these alone would be powerless to decide a true vocation, above all, to sustain it.

The truth is, that Jesus wants for his auxiliaries and apostles, only brave and generous hearts, hearts disposed to spend their treasures of tenderness, their whole energies, for others. Selfish and narrow souls, hearts filled with themselves, and intent forever on commiserating their own personal griefs, would not be of the slightest service to Him.

Sometimes, ordinary Christians are astonished at the heroism of religious vocations. They ask why people are not content to serve God in the world, without seeking out such extraordinary paths. But generous souls hearken to the touching appeal of the Saviour.

“The harvest, indeed, is great, but the laborers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that He send laborers into His harvest.”

And young men present themselves, and young women offer themselves, to Jesus for His divine mission. In the flower of their age, they renounce earthly joys to devote themselves to the service of children, of orphans, of the poor, of all those conquered in the battle of life. Their devotedness is the more heroic, that they know beforehand how little reward they need expect upon earth. Often, very often, in fact, indifference or ingratitude, if not persecution, shall be the only return for such sacrifices. Jesus has warned them of this. But a great hope sustains the courage of all these valiant ones.

Looking higher than earth, beyond the present life, they see the future, and that future promises them a magnificent reward. The eternal truths which they put into the hearts of little children, the germs of confidence and of repentance which they sow in the souls of the sick, of sinners, of the old, who, in the decline of life, have no other refuge than the hospital, the house of God,—no other friends than the servants of God,—shall one day produce fruit. These humble laborers shall not reap these fruits upon earth, but they know that by their devotedness and

by their prayers they are preparing saints for heaven.

In heaven, they shall find again these little ones of the earth, who have become eternally blessed. In heaven they shall gather the fruits of gratitude, which were denied them here below. In heaven they shall be loved and blessed by those souls upon whom they lavished the treasures of their virginal and apostolic hearts. In heaven, finally, shall be realized in their regard, the glorious promise which the prophet Isaias made to the church :

“Give praise, O thou barren, that bearest not ! Sing forth praise and make a joyful noise, that thou didst not travail with child ; for many are the children of the desolate, more than of the married wife, saith the Lord.” (Isaias LIV, 1.)

Religious Vocation and the Family.

Christian parents, if God calls one of your children to a religious vocation, give him generously, even if that vocation upsets your plans and seems to destroy the hopes which you so fondly cherished. This call is the greatest honor which could be bestowed upon your child, as also the most priceless of graces, and these advantages extend to the whole family. When the daughter of a family makes a wealthy marriage in the world, all the members thereof rejoice and consider her honored

and secure thenceforth against all the vicissitudes of life.

Things are in no wise different in the family of God. A religious vocation, even as regards the present life, is a great protection, and the source of most abundant graces for the family from which it proceeds.

A continual prayer, a daily sacrifice is offered to Jesus by the soul of his devoted friend, not only for herself, but for her parents and relatives. Who can tell the value of this sacrifice, the graces obtained, the dangers averted, the conversions prepared, the good deaths obtained, in Christian families, by the suppliant intercession and the heroic devotion of a soul consecrated to God in the cloister!

But it is in heaven, above all, that we must seek for the true value of a religious vocation. In heaven the glory of children shall be poured forth upon their parents. What an honor it shall then be for a family to see one of its members occupying so high a place among the Saints. Shall the parents of a St. Aloysius, a Stanislaus Kostka, a Francis de Sales, and many others, regret then, that they have given their sons to God and to souls?

Christian parents, look beyond the present! Look to the future! At the price, no doubt, of painful, but still temporary sacrifices, if God offers one of your children a religious vocation, accept it for him and for his with gratitude.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Christian Friendship on Earth and in Heaven.

On Earth.

Side by side with domestic affection is another affection, wider in its influence, as in its objects, but none the less sweet and generous. This affection of the heart is called friendship.

According to St. Thomas, it supposes the mutual communication of the goods possessed, a habitual sympathy of intelligence and of heart, of thoughts and affections. "To love the same things, to hate the same things," says St. Jerome, "that is what strengthens friendship." (Ad Demetr.)

A friendship once contracted, imposes the obligation of making the friend's reputation one's own, of defending, or, at need, avenging, the insults offered to it. It demands, in the hour of trial, sympathetic words, which alleviate sorrow by sharing it. Finally, it unites the will of each in a common action. True friends work together; they mutually assist each other; and, if success crowns their

efforts, they profit by it and enjoy it together.

Therefore, mutual sympathy, compassion, and reciprocal action, are not only the component elements of friendship, but that which preserve it.

David and Jonathan.

The Holy Ghost celebrates this sweetness of friendship in some delightful pages. Most touching is the union of hearts between David, and Jonathan—the son of King Saul. The Scripture tells us that “the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.”

From that time forth all was in common between the two young men, joy and sorrow, hope and fear. To show David that he really looked upon him as a brother, as another self, Jonathan exchanged with him his sword, his bow, his girdle, even to the very coat with which he was clothed. (I. Kings XVIII.)

Later, when the young warrior fell with his father in the mountains of Gilboa, David uttered a heartrending cry of sorrow, and abandoned himself to grief as, in touching accents, he bewailed his friend, Jonathan:

“Ye mountains of Gilboa, let neither dew nor rain come upon you, nor let there be in your fields first fruits, for there was cast away the shield of the valiant! . . .

“Now are the valiant fallen in battle!

“Now was Jonathan slain in thy high places!

“I grieve for thee, my brother, Jonathan, exceeding beautiful. . . . As the mother loveth her only son, so did I love thee.” (II. Kings I.

Jesus and Friendship.

After having sanctified the human family, the Saviour of men deigned also to sanctify friendship, by practicing it Himself and making new laws for it.

From amongst the numerous disciples who followed Him, Jesus chose twelve whom he made his apostles, and from these he set apart three, Peter, James, and John, to be the friends of his heart. He showed on all occasions a most cordial and touching friendship for the twelve, and still more for his three intimates.

He had no secrets from them. He allowed them to question Him freely, and deigned to explain to them, what he hid from others under the veil of parables. Together they labored to establish the kingdom of God, sharing the same weariness, interested in the same cause, rejoicing in the same success. In the day of his anguish, when the hour of great sufferings had come, Jesus desired to have his three friends with him that they might console and encourage him.

The resurrection made no change in the character of these friendly relations. He continued to hold the same friendly intercourse with them in his glorious life, showing them the same cordial kindness.

In proof of this read the narrative of the apparitions of Jesus to his beloved disciples, and especially the scene upon the Sea of Tiberias (John xxi). Could any friend have shown greater affection or more thoughtful delicacy toward those he loved.

But Jesus did more than sanctify friendship by his example; he elevated, he extended it; he rendered it immortal, by the wonderful qualities with which he endowed it.

Jesus Ennobles Friendship.

Human friendship rests upon the noblest and purest sentiments of the human heart, but it does not escape the assaults of the enemy, who destroys all that is best here below. The heart is unstable. It sometimes grows cold, or even hostile, towards those whom it once ardently loved; distance weakens and finally overcomes love.

God remedied these imperfections by no longer giving, as a basis for friendship, mere natural sympathy of character and tastes, which are liable to change, but the very charity of God for men. Therefore, Christian friendship is freed from the mutability of

human things, and partakes of the stability which belongs to God alone. It is ennobled by that union of hearts in the very heart of God. Thence does it merit the sublime eulogium pronounced upon it by the Holy Spirit :

“A faithful friend is a strong defence, and he that hath found him hath found a treasure. . . .

“A faithful friend is the medicine of life and immortality ; and they that fear the Lord shall find him.” (Eccles. vi, 14–16.)

Following the example of our Saviour, Christians demand from friendship consolation in the trials of life, greater strength for the struggle, and more of sunshine in their existence. But if we would inhale its most delicate aroma, taste its most delicious fruits, we must read the lives of the great saints of the Church. There, truly, does Christian friendship shine forth in all its freshness, and in the full resplendence of its beauty.

What could be more exquisite than the friendship of St. Gregory for St. Basil the Great, St. Augustine and his dear Nebridius, St. Francis de Sales and his spiritual daughter, St. Frances de Chantal ?

“Oh, but it is good,” said the latter, “to love upon earth as we shall love in heaven ! The delicious balm of devotion, distilled from one heart to another, by a continual participation therein, so that it may be said that God has given His blessing to that amiable friendship,

His benediction, and a life which shall last for endless ages. Never shall that chaste friendship be changed, save into a purer and more perfect union, an image of the blessed friendship which shall be enjoyed in heaven.” (Inter. Life, ch. xx.)

Jesus Extended Friendship.

Having established friendship upon an immutable basis, Jesus endowed it with a power of love and self-sacrifice of which it had before seemed incapable. Under the gentle name of charity it extended its influence not only over intimate friends, parents, or kindred; it reached out to all men. Treasures of tenderness and self-sacrifice were henceforth devoted to the service of men who had hitherto met only with indifference, to the vanquished in the struggle of life. All who suffered learned to know and to love it.

The afflicted never again could complain of being friendless. The orphan found a second mother, with a mother’s love and care; the sick a ministering angel at their bedside, to tend them with the utmost solicitude; the old,—bereft of home, family, and even bread,—had opened to them an asylum, as peaceful as that of Nazareth, where sweet-faced, kindly-voiced women awoke in them memories of mother or sister, beloved in the long ago.

Once more the heart of age was surprised into the thrill of joy, with which it felt itself

beloved. Oh, the friendship of Christ, infused into human hearts, has been as a beneficent oil, a balm, for the wounds of poor humanity.

Jesus Makes Friendship Immortal.

Finally, to complete the glory of the new friendship, Jesus has rescued it from the power of those laws which fatally limit human friendship. However constant the affections of earth, death destroys them and brings them abruptly to an end; but, when souls love each other with a mutual affection drawn from the same source, the heart of Jesus, their love becomes indestructible. Neither time, nor distance, nor death, can affect it. Those who love each other in Christ, and for Christ, shall continue still to love each other beyond the grave. No doubt the conditions of friendship shall be materially changed, but, in the glory of the heavenly country, or in the flames of purgatory, a true friendship between the living and the dead continues to exist.

What relations now exist between the friends of earth, and those in heaven and purgatory? These are questions interesting to our piety and our hearts. Although they diverge a little from the plan which we had marked out, I feel sure that our readers will be pleased to consider them briefly.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

The Living and the Dead.

When the soul is separated from the body, it knows immediately, by a direct judgment of Christ, through the ministration of the angel guardian, or by a sudden illumination, a mysterious voice of conscience, the place whither it is to go—heaven, hell, or purgatory.

If it be perfectly justified, then, accompanied by its angel, it takes its flight to the blessed country. God receives it lovingly, gives it the new name by which it is to be known in heaven, and assigns to it that rank amongst the saints which is due to its merits. What shall henceforth be the existence of that soul? What shall be its operations? Shall it still retain its relations with earth and its earthly friends?

“Père Monsabré, in his Conference on Purgatory, speaks thus:

“Going forth living from the bonds of death, the soul takes with it all its faculties, not sleeping nor condemned to inertia until the awakening of the flesh, which it is to resume at the end of time, but still capable of

action, though the conditions of its activity shall be very different. The consciousness of its personality, the intellectual habits which it has contracted, the knowledge which it has acquired, the memories which are engraven upon its incorruptible substance, remain in it with its life."

The glorified soul shall retain also the power of motion, according to its will. The mode of transportation shall be changed, that is evident, but the act itself shall remain. As a bird flies gently and swiftly through the plains of air, so the soul, impelled by its will, shall transport itself from one place to another. It shall also retain the faculty of communicating its thoughts and of knowing those of others. (Suarez, *de Anim. Supp.*, II and III.)

The blessed souls shall not lose their interest in what is passing upon earth. "They are aware," continues Suarez, "of many particular facts, which they see, either in the essence of God, or in their own substance, so that their joy may be complete, or that they may help, in some manner, those who are still upon earth.

"In fine, they are capable of understanding and loving. That is a point of Catholic doctrine." (Suarez, *de Anim. Supp.*, ch. VII, ad. 3.)

Friendship Beyond the Grave.

So that the glorified souls preserve intelligence and heart, with all the memories which they have brought from their earthly life. They have a marvelous activity; they know the happenings of life here below; they understand, they love, and, by consequence, possess, all that is necessary to continue, with parents and friends, the friendly relations which once existed.

Between the living and the dead there is then a union invisible, but real, a union of souls, with mutual correspondence and love. More, the affection of disembodied souls, freed from whatever was once imperfect and human, is still more ardent and efficacious.

Secure henceforth of their own happiness, and knowing its price, they are deeply interested in the salvation and sanctification of their parents and friends. Their chief anxiety is to share, one day in heaven, a common felicity with those whom they continue to love with their whole hearts.

Here we have, then, all the elements of true friendship,—community of goods, interchange of good offices, mutual charity.

We give to those who are gone the tribute of remembrance, reverence, and good works, which add to the accidental happiness of the glorified souls; and they, in return, pray to

God for their earthly friends. The friends of Jesus, living familiarly with Him, they are most favorably situated for gaining their petitions.

There is no doubt that it is through their friendly intercession that we receive many considerable favors, without having even solicited them,—good thoughts and generous resolutions, inclining the heart to virtue, unforeseen help which brings us relief and consolation. Who can tell how great is the beneficent influence of those heavenly souls upon our souls?

Even the earth can produce instances of delicate friendship, which divines and foresees before a request is formulated. How much more shall this be the case, and in how much greater a degree of excellence, in heaven!

Oh, yes, kindred and friends in heaven, are a great consolation and a great protection for the Christian. And there is scarcely a family which cannot boast of so priceless a privilege.

Earth and Purgatory.

After death all the holy souls do not immediately go into heaven. They possess, it is true, sanctifying grace, which renders them fitted for the beatific vision, but in many of them still remain imperfections, and venial

faults unexpiated, debts which have not been paid to the divine justice.

These souls cannot then enter into the heavenly country, where nothing defiled can be permitted, but the providence of God has provided them with a means of paying these debts and washing out these stains. Between heaven and hell lies a place of expiation, where, by resigned suffering, the last traces of human weakness disappear from the soul. This place is Purgatory. The greater number of men remain there a greater or less time before being received into their true country.

What is the condition of the souls in purgatory? Have they any relations with earth? What is the nature of those relations?

Condition of the Souls in Purgatory.

“The holy souls,” says Père Binet, “are at once happy and unhappy, consoled and afflicted, in purgatory. They are happy, because they know they are destined for heaven, that they are friends of God, and that they can no longer offend Him by any sin; but, on the other hand, they are unhappy, because there are stains upon them which offend their beloved Father, because they are tormented exceedingly by the pains of purgatory, and because they cannot enter heaven, which is the object of all their desires, until they have

fully satisfied the divine justice.” (Binet, Happiness and Unhappiness of the Souls in Purgatory.)

Moreover, the souls in purgatory, like those who are already in heaven, retain their intellectual faculties, intelligence, memory stored with all the impressions which their hearts have accumulated during life; for they, too, are capable of understanding and loving, even though, unlike the glorified souls, they do not see things which are passing upon earth, because they have not the beatific vision. Can not God, of Himself, or through the ministry of angels, impart this knowledge to them?

“The souls in purgatory,” says Suarez, “know at least, in general, the dangers to which we are exposed. Have they not trodden the path that we tread? Remembering the innumerable perils to which they were themselves exposed, they know ours.” (de Purg. D. 47, S. 2.)

These souls possess, then, whatsoever is necessary for the continuance of the friendly relations which they maintained with us during life.

Earth Friends and Purgatory.

Still more, by an admirable and all merciful providence, we can do for our friends in purgatory what it was impossible for us to do

upon earth,—relieve their sufferings, console and heal them, rendering them happy. Yes, in the very place of expiation, Christian charity works these wonders, and divine justice accepts the atonement offered by human affection. By our prayers and good works, by our communions and penances, above all, by the holy sacrifice of the mass, we can pay the debt of our relatives and friends, and hasten the day when the glorious gates of the heavenly country shall open to receive them.

“It cannot be doubted,” says St. Augustine, “that the souls in purgatory are aided by the prayers of Holy Church, by the holy sacrifice of the mass, and by the alms which are given for the repose of their souls.” (Serm. 172.)

But, friendship which gives, exacts a return; it requires community of goods, mutual help. Are the souls in purgatory in a position to fulfil these conditions?

Do They Pray for Us?

Although they are unable to pray efficaciously for themselves, many eminent theologians, and, amongst others, Suarez, are of opinion that they can pray, and that in fact they do pray, for their earthly friends and relatives. Do they not know our wants? Are they not aware, by their own experience, how much we have need of the divine

assistance, to resist the temptations of sensuality, the suggestions of the devil? That is sufficient to make them, out of the love they bear us, pray for us.

“As we have seen elsewhere, they are the friends of God, and we may be confidently assured that God will hear prayers which must be all powerful to touch His heart.

“I will add,” continues Suarez, “that our Lord, of Himself, or through the ministry of angels, may make known to them our actual spiritual needs, and our recommendations to their prayers.” (Suarez, de Purg. D. 47, S. 2.)

The example of the saints is an encouragement to this pious practice.

St. Catherine of Bologna had a most tender devotion to the souls in purgatory. She prayed most fervently for them, recommended all her spiritual needs to them, and persuaded others to do the same, saying: “When I want to obtain any grace from the eternal Father, I have recourse to the souls who are detained in purgatory; I beg of them to offer my request, in my name, to the Divine Majesty, and I feel that I am heard through their intervention.” (Binet, Happiness and Unhappiness of the Souls in Purg., p. 146.)

These charitable relations between earth and purgatory explain and justify the popular belief of Catholic countries in apparitions of the dead, in the *warnings* which precede

the approaching death of a member of a family. No doubt, a judicious discrimination must be exercised in dealing with these stories, told of evenings at the fireside during the month of the dead; but many of them are true. God thus rewards the faith and charity of Catholic peoples toward the dead, and, by these extraordinary occurrences, He encourages the devotion to the departed.

The following is a strange but, as it seems, perfectly authentic narrative. The fact is related by a priest, who was himself an eyewitness of it.

“I am a secular priest in London, and my parish is a very large and populous one.

“On Saturday, the 3d of November, 1888, I had had a more than ordinarily laborious day, and it was only at ten o'clock at night that I was able to resume the reading of my breviary, in order to finish it before going to bed.

“All at once the bell rang violently, and, as I was going down to answer it myself, I found my servant confronted by an elderly lady, who, in a supplicating voice, begged that a priest might be sent without delay to such a house, in such a street, giving the number, to administer to a young man who was at the point of death.

“I asked her if the call could not be postponed until the following morning, but she

answered by imploring me not to defer it for a single moment. I wrote the name of the patient and his address on a slate and prepared to set out.

“I confess that I was wearied and harrassed with a long day’s work, and I could not help gently reproaching my guide for not having come sooner. I saw that these words seemed to cause her great pain, so I added with all possible kindness :

“‘You may count on me. I shall be at your house in less than twenty minutes.’ She said to me, then, in a low voice, but with deep emotion :

“‘May God reward you for your charity, and may He be with you at the hour of death.’

“As I dismissed her, I looked at her closely, trying to remember if I had ever seen her at church. Her face and her voice were absolutely strange to me, and I heard for the first time the name which she gave me as that of the dying man.

“Ten minutes afterward I was on my way. It was a real November night ; the fog was thick, the streets were deserted. I passed through several streets, and came at last to a square upon which opened that of which I was in search. I found the address which had been given.

“An old woman opened the door.

“‘Is there any very sick person in this house?’ I asked.

“‘No, sir,’ answered she; ‘this is such a number,’ and she gave me the very one which was upon my slate.

“‘That is it exactly,’ I said; ‘I was asked to come here by an old lady, who came for me this evening. I am the Catholic priest of ——— parish, and I have been summoned to attend a sick person who is in danger of death.’

“‘There is no sick person here, sir,’ she answered. ‘You must certainly have been given the wrong address.’

“I was about to go away, discomfited, when a young man, who had been listening to the dialogue, came out of an adjoining room, and very cordially expressed his regret that I should be out so late in such inclement weather.

“‘If you will come in here, Father,’ he added, ‘there is a good fire.’

“I followed him, repeating, as I did so, what I had already told the servant, adding how much annoyed I was that a wrong address had been given me. Then, remembering that he had addressed me as Father, I asked: ‘Are there any Catholics here?’

“‘Not that I know of,’ said he, adding after a moment’s pause, ‘although I ought to be a Catholic, for I was baptized one.’

“We then got into a long and serious conversation. The young man was evidently honest and sincere, but had given up the practice of his religion since the age of ten years, even while preserving the faith in the depths of his heart. God blessed my words, for, before I left him, he had gone to confession, and we had made an appointment for the next morning.

“On the following day, which was the Sunday within the Octave of all Saints, I expected to see my penitent arriving, but, to my great astonishment, I did not see him either in church or at the presbytery. The next day, Monday, his old servant came, all in tears, to inform me of the sudden death of her young master, whom they had found dead in his bed, on Sunday morning, from a stroke of apoplexy. According to the physician’s statement, death must have ensued shortly after my departure, for, in the morning, the body was already stiff and icy cold.

“I have but one more word to add to this simple, but true story.

“I went to the house of death to pray beside the coffin, which was placed in one of the principal rooms. I was absorbed in prayer, when chancing to raise my eyes suddenly, I saw hanging over the chimney-piece, the portrait of the aged lady, who had come for me ‘to administer to a young man at the point of death.’

“My servant, who had accompanied me, when she saw the portrait, also recognized it as that of the person with whom she had conversed. But, what was my emotion, when I learned that the portrait represented the young man’s mother, who had been dead for several years.”

CHAPTER XXIX.

Friends in Heaven.

Christian friendship begins upon earth by the union of two hearts in the mutual charity of the heart of Jesus. It continues beyond the grave by the communion of saints, which unites the Church Triumphant with the Church Militant, and the latter with the Church Suffering of Purgatory; but, in heaven, it attains its full perfection.

If we have the happiness of going to heaven, we shall find there our friends of old, and enjoy once more their affection and their society.

“In the other life,” says St. Thomas, “the society of our friends shall not be essential to our happiness, since God shall satisfy all the desires of our hearts. He, the friend by excellence loved above all things, shall suffice to fill the soul with the intoxication of ecstasy by the beauty and goodness of His

essence. . . . Still, this most intimate union with God shall not cause other souls who have been loved to be forgotten, and friends shall take pleasure in finding one another in the heavenly beatitude, in enjoying each other's presence, whilst together they enjoy the perfect good. This companionship, without being necessary to our final happiness, shall be, however, its harmonious development." (1a, 2 2, IV, a8, D 3.)

Unknown Friends.

In heaven we shall not only see once more our earthly friends, but we shall also know other heavenly friends, whom our mortal eyes have never seen, but whom our hearts have learned to love. In reading the history of others' lives, the charm of their virtues, the beauty and elevation of their intellects, we were drawn irresistibly towards them. We chose these great saints as protectors and friends; and that was not a sort of mystical sympathy, based on sentiment and imagination, but a real friendship, which imposed reciprocal duties. In return for the homage we paid them, these heavenly friends have been our patrons. They have taken an interest in us; their hearts, united to our hearts, have rendered us love for love.

In the heavenly country, we shall see them face to face, and enjoy a friendship with

them which shall be a source of the greatest pleasure to us.

In heaven, we shall know the saints whom the church gave us for patrons at baptism, and who have had the special mission of interesting themselves in our salvation. Amongst all the blessed of the heavenly country, they shall have a right to our gratitude for the protection which they have afforded us.

In heaven, finally, we shall enjoy the company of the guardian angel, who, from the cradle to the grave, has been a most constant and devoted friend to us! From how many dangers has he not preserved us, frequently averting from us a death, which, under the circumstances, alas, would have been the death at once of body and soul.

His good counsels have often brought us back to God, and helped us to persevere in His love. When our soul goes into eternity, this faithful friend shall accompany it to the tribunal of God, and, if it obtain a favorable sentence, shall himself introduce it into the heavenly country. Oh, yes, we shall be united to him throughout all eternity. And how great shall be our gratitude for his services and protection!

We already have passed in review the joys which constitute the happiness of the human heart here on earth, the joys of society, with

its religious and national festivals, the affections of the domestic hearth; the sweetness of friendship. Now, all these pleasures shall be found again in heaven, but freed from those imperfections which lessen their charm, and embellished with all the beauties which can render them most dear and most attractive.

Oh, how good it will be to live in that heavenly society! Now, the heart delivered at last from its anguish, shall open wide to joy and happiness.

We have striven to give some idea of that happiness. But alas! the words of St. Paul remain forever true, the human heart cannot conceive whilst here on earth, the goods which God has prepared for those who love him.

It is like endeavoring to make a child understand the joys of heart and intellect experienced by the man of mature age; or, striving to make the poor dweller in the desert comprehend the splendor of our great capitals, or the life led there by the rich, or by the kings of the earth.

Still the little which we know of heaven is surely of a nature to encourage us in our miseries, and to console us for the loss of friends and relatives.

When, therefore, the heart, thwarted in its projects by the disappointments of life,

wounded by suffering, stricken in its affections by painful separations, is saddened and complains, raise it on high; leave aside the present, and look at the future, while we say with confidence: "Yet a few more years, and I shall enter into the eternal rest. If God deigns to have mercy upon me, I shall enter into the land of happiness. There, I shall find again, relatives and friends; there, we shall resume together the sweet relations of other times; there, I shall enjoy the company of Jesus and of Mary; there, I shall see God Himself, I shall love and possess Him; my heart shall be fully satisfied in partaking of the joy and glory of the heavenly country."

CHAPTER XXX.

Happiness of the Intellect.

To complete this study of the life of the blessed, it remains for us to speak of the joys promised to the human intellect in heaven. They are the noblest and most elevated of all, because they bring the elect nearer to God, who is pure and infinite intelligence. On the other hand, however, they are the most difficult to explain and make understood,—in the first place, because of their sublimity, and, in the second, because the personal experience of these joys is unknown to the great major-

ity of men. Busied with their affairs and with the necessary occupations of life, the greater number have neither the time nor the education necessary to enjoy these pleasures of a higher order.

We shall speak, however, of those which are within the range of all, leaving to others to explore by deeper studies the field of happiness opened out in heaven to the human intelligence.

Activity of the Intellect upon Earth.

To know truth, to contemplate beauty, and to enjoy it, are the component elements of intellectual happiness upon earth. Truth is the domain of the learned. They apply themselves to its discovery in the various departments of human knowledge; they study the earth and the innumerable creatures which it contains; they investigate the laws which govern the universe, and the causes which produce this multiplicity of effects. It is certain, too, that these researches have been very far from fruitless.

Numerous and splendid discoveries have crowned their labors, and our civilization, with its progress and inventions, is the result of an intelligence which, by its natural powers, has acquired such wealth.

But the giants of science are the first to admit that we know but little, and that genius

wrests one secret from nature, only to be confronted straightway with other mysteries, which remain unexplained and inexplicable.

The microscope has revealed the existence of infinitesimal atoms. It shows, in a single drop of water, myriads of living creatures, being multiplied with prodigious rapidity in the midst of that miniature ocean. They move, struggle, and die, in the space of a few moments. What are the laws which govern their generation? Why are they born, and why do they die? What is the use of their existence? All is mystery!

Armed with powerful telescopes, the learned explore the vastness of the firmament, and, beyond the stars already known, behold! thousands of new suns appear to their astonished eyes. The proportions of these luminous worlds, their distances, baffle all calculations of human science. There again we are humbled, and must acknowledge the limits which God has put to the flights of man's intelligence.

Whilst the man of science applies himself to the discovery of truth, the artist is occupied in contemplating beauty and striving to reproduce it in his works. A sudden illumination, a sort of fleeting ecstasy, causes reflections of the sovereign beauty to shine before his eyes, and the painter strives to reproduce on canvas the features of that divine beauty which has enchanted his soul.

The musician hears within him harmonies which seem an echo of the heavenly song, and seeks to fix them by musical notes. But, even though these artists create masterpieces, they are discontented with themselves, and lament that they are unable to reach the ideal which charms them. Truth and beauty inhabit regions which are too mysterious and too elevated to be reached by human intelligence.

Later, in heaven, these aspirations shall be satisfied. Then truth and beauty shall reveal themselves in all their glorified splendor.

Illumined by the light of glory, we shall see God directly, without veil and without mystery, God the principle of all truth, source of all beauty. We shall contemplate, at our leisure, His various attributes, reflected in the exterior works of His omnipotence.

In the land of the living our intellect shall be endowed with marvelous activity. Heaven shall not be, by any means, inertia in happiness. As has been said, on the contrary, it shall offer an inexhaustible field of study and observation. There, scientist and artist may satisfy their desires to know and to express truth, to love and to admire beauty. The new heavens and the new earth shall have no secrets from them.

“They shall know their laws, they shall understand their sublime ordinances, they

shall behold striking proofs of God's omnipresence and His government of all material things." (Suppl. Quest. 92, a. 2.)

**In Heaven All the Elect Shall Be Scientists
and Artists.**

These lofty intellectual pursuits shall no longer be, as upon earth, the inheritance of the few privileged ones; they shall be common to all the elect.

To Draw a Parallel.

Suppose that all that the wisest have written upon science and the fine arts, was collected in one vast library, and that God were to say to a man :

"I will give your intellect sufficient acumen to understand all that human learning, and also memory sufficient to retain it and make it your own. You alone shall possess the entire knowledge of humanity at large." Most certainly such a man would be a marvel to his fellow-beings, a prodigy of learning such as never has been, nor ever shall be, seen.

Suppose, again, that God should endow a human soul with artistic power to paint like Raphael, to conceive and execute sublime monuments like Angelo, to compose symphonies like Mozart. With what emotions would that soul be thrilled, emotions such as never

stirred human soul before. Imagine the enthusiasm, the ecstasy, of happiness.

Now God will perform this prodigy in heaven, not for one man alone, but for all the elect. Yes, the most humble amongst them shall possess more knowledge, shall know more of truth, than all the wise men of the universe, including King Solomon himself, who was, nevertheless, according to the testimony of Holy Scripture, the wisest and most learned of men. The humblest of the elect shall more fully enjoy the charms of beauty than all the artists of earth collectively, because God will give a supernatural light to the human intelligence, which shall render it capable of seeing the beautiful and the true in all their splendor.

Degrees of Aptitude.

This does not mean, however, that all the saints shall understand truth in like degree, or that they shall appreciate beauty in the same manner. No, the difference which is apparent upon earth, shall continue to exist in heaven.

To Illustrate Our Meaning.

Varied aptitudes for knowing truth and perceiving what is delicate and beautiful in creation, are seen here below amongst men. Intellects differ, as the flowers of the field

vary in color and perfume. Two men together look upon a sunset. One is a laborer, without instruction or artistic taste. He contemplates the prospect, experiencing a vague satisfaction therein, which causes him to exclaim: "That is beautiful!" But he says no more. His admiration goes no farther, and he can give no reason for the impression which he has received.

The other, on the contrary, is an artist, fitted by study and intellectual culture to discover the beautiful, and to appreciate its varied details. His eyes observe one after another of the different features of the landscape; he marks the play of light upon the meadows and the forest trees; he admires the varied tints blending into perfect harmony; he enjoys the calm of the evening, the balminess of the air; each element of the scene has a voice for his soul, and conveys a separate joy to him.

These two men have the same spectacle before their eyes; they both admire the same beauties; the scene gives pleasure to both. But, how much greater is the enjoyment of the artist than that of his companion!

The same difference as to aptitude shall still exist in the heavenly country. In speaking of the beatific vision (Chap. XIII), we have already said that it shall differ for each of the just. All of them shall possess that

blessed vision, but they shall not possess it in the same degree. It shall correspond to the merits acquired, and shall be more perfect in proportion as the merits are greater.

In the same way the saints, who are most elevated, shall experience “a wider development of their spiritual faculties, a higher perfection of their sensible faculties, and consequently, a greater capacity for enjoying the pleasures which will accompany the exercise of those faculties.

“All shall see, all shall understand, all shall enjoy, the varied and incalculable riches prepared by God for His children, but all shall not experience the same degree of delectation from them. Each shall receive it according to the supernatural perfection of his senses, and this perfection shall be what each shall have merited by the relative holiness of his life.” (Boudreaux, *Beatitude of Heaven*, p. 239.)

Therefore, among the saints, some shall be more intellectual and more artistic than others. We have explained this difference as regards the artistic enjoyment of the sight; let us give an example, taken from the pleasures of the hearing. As Père Boudreaux well expresses it (p. 240):

“A grand concert is given in a hall at which all classes of society are represented. All hear the same melody, the same voices, the

same instruments, and feel more or less pleasure therein. But is this pleasure the same for all? Evidently not.

“Those who are not endowed with a musical ear, have very slight enjoyment in the concert. Others, possessed of a sufficiently pronounced musical instinct, which is not, however, developed by education, enjoy it in a much greater degree than the first. But, how much deeper is the enjoyment of those, who, in addition to a natural talent for music, have devoted long study and persevering practice thereto!

“They will follow each part, appreciate the details of the most complex harmony, and experience a most exquisite delight in chords, which the uninitiated ear of the vulgar scarcely perceives.

“You have there the same object present to all and possessed by each one as completely as though he alone enjoyed it. And yet, what variety in the enjoyment! Every individual feels it in the measure of his artistic development.”

In the same way, in heaven, the blessed shall all hear the same harmony, but enjoy it only in proportion to the capability which shall be a part of the reward. Similarly, the other senses shall be perfected and developed, according to the greater or less sanctity of each one of the just.

On earth, education singularly increases the happiness of man, by perfecting each of his faculties. A man, who has developed his intelligence and artistic taste, has a far pleasanter existence than the poor and illiterate, who are obliged to toil every day for their own livelihood and that of others.

In heaven, personal sanctity shall give the elect a greater or less capacity for understanding truth, a more or less perfect aptitude for appreciating and enjoying beauty. The higher a soul is raised in glory the greater shall be his happiness.

Now God places this elevation within the reach of all men, even the most humble. The workingman, who is without education, may, if he chooses, accumulate innumerable merits here below, which shall endow him hereafter, by causing him to know God better, with the loftiest intelligence, and procure the most exquisite pleasure for his senses. In a word, he may obtain for eternity, the favored position which the rich and learned of earth occupy in time.

In heaven, shall be made the final readjustment, of which our Lord speaks in his gospel. The rich and the wise, those who were first upon earth, having in many instances amassed fewer supernatural merits than other Christians, who were placed lower in the social scale, shall lose their distinguished position.

The humble and the ignorant, the working-man, or the poor woman, who has spent her life in prayer and retirement, shall find themselves then, rich in heavenly goods. They shall be placed higher in the celestial hierarchy and their happiness shall be greater.

Therefore, those who were last upon earth shall be first in heaven.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Pleasures of the Intellect in Heaven.

In speaking of the vision of God, we have already said that the elect shall see in it and by it, the very source of all that which upon earth interested the intelligence or gave happiness to the heart.

They shall know, no longer a few truths, but truth itself ; they shall admire, not alone some pale reflections of beauty displayed in literature or the fine arts, but beauty itself, under all its forms and in its full splendor.

The intellect shall be occupied with these sublime studies. But the wonders of the physical world are not all that shall be open to its investigations. It shall also know the secrets of the moral world.

What does that mean ?

The Intellect and the Moral World.

It shall see what is now known as the Providence of God unfolded to its gaze. That is to say it shall perceive and comprehend the action of God on men, and on the things of this world. It shall follow the complexities of the struggle, which, since the beginning of the world, has existed between good and evil,—the spirit of God and the infernal powers,—to keep man free and in the paths of justice, or to drag him into the ways of iniquity. It shall see the history of the world with its revolutions and its vicissitudes; the periods of progress and the epochs of retrogression and decadence; the causes which led to the prosperity of nations or brought them to degeneracy and ruin.

St. Augustine, in his great work, "The City of God," examines these questions with the exalted vision of a saint, and the perspicacity of a man of genius. His work is a masterpiece, which was continued later by another masterpiece, "Discourse upon Universal History," by Bossuet. But human intelligence, however powerful it may be, cannot fathom to their depths, the mysteries of Providence. That knowledge is reserved for heaven.

We love to read the lives of celebrated men, or to hear the wise discuss the causes of their

success or the reason of their fall. In heaven the saints shall know these causes, and, with inerrancy of judgment, they shall be aware of the truth concerning each man and each nation. The diverse ways by which Providence conducted human events to their ends shall be made manifest, namely, the glory of God and the final triumph of justice.

History of the Soul.

Another history of great interest to the blessed shall be that of their own lives, the mysterious workings of the two spirits upon their souls, the alternations of the struggle and the victory.

Each of the élect shall see how, despite the efforts of the enemy and his temporary gains, grace gradually detached the soul from its disorderly inclinations, snatching it at last from the slough of vice, and transforming it into the image of the sovereign good. The magnificent chain of graces of conversion, and of final perseverance, shall be manifested to the intellect, and shall excite the heart's gratitude.

"The blessed in heaven," says Father Drexilius, "shall behold their whole lives gathered, as it were, into one page, and on that page they shall clearly discern the paths which they have trodden; how often they have wandered in darkness; how frequently

refused to obey or serve God, and how that same God has brought back His faithless servant to grace.”

In this delightful retrospect of time that is past, the just will readily acknowledge all the benefits which they owe to the liberality of their God, all the dangers which they have escaped through His divine protection, and their still greater peril, when, having fallen into mortal sin, they stood upon the very verge of the infernal precipice, requiring but the slightest shock to precipitate them into its depths, and being withheld from the abyss solely by the hand of God.

How deeply grateful shall the elect then be, knowing what heaven is, and what they should have lost in losing it.

When a man, by many toils and dangers, has amassed a fortune, he loves, in the midst of prosperity, to look upon bygone days of poverty and suffering. Comfortably installed in his luxurious dwelling, enjoying the goods of every kind which surround him, secure in the affection of his family and friends, he loves to recall the humble roof which sheltered his cradle, and under which the days of his childhood were spent in toil and penury.

He mentally reviews the first rude beginnings of life, the desperate struggle, the aspirations, the deceptions, the hopes ever upspringing with renewed ardor ; he loves to

tell of the dangers which he ran, the peril of death which threatened him ; for the security and happiness of the present lend a charm to those memories of the past.

So shall it be when the elect in heaven look back upon their mortal lives, perceiving the snares which the devil laid for them and how, on such and such an occasion, the hand of God protected them from a violent death, which would have also meant damnation. When they realize how patiently God waited for them, how lovingly and gradually He led their hearts to Himself ; when, above all, they look down from the heights of heaven into the depths of hell, beholding there the place which had been destined for them ; when they compare the joys of heaven with the torments of the abyss, the eternal beatitude with the eternal despair which might have been their portion, oh, how joyful their souls, how overflowing with gratitude their hearts, and how they will bless the Father, who has shown so much goodness and mercy in their regard.

St. Teresa, having seen in a vision the place which she would have occupied in hell, had she not overcome a dangerous temptation put into her heart by the devil, shuddered with horror at the very remembrance of the danger she had incurred, and never ceased to thank God for having saved her from such a fate.

In heaven, the more the saints know of God and His benefits to them, the more they are filled with love and gratitude towards Him.

History of the Other Blessed.

They shall also admire similar workings of grace in the other blessed. They shall know the history of each one. The narrative of noble deeds done by the great men of earth captivates our attention. We applaud their heroic acts. How great, then, shall be the admiration excited in us by the intimate knowledge of the marvels wrought by grace in the saints.

The faint reflections of holiness, which we are permitted to see here on earth, rejoice the heart and command veneration. Yet these are but feeble rays piercing the veil of humility in which the saints, with jealous care, enshroud themselves. But in heaven there shall be no tremulous humility. Each of the just shall know himself in the splendor of his merits, and the beauty of the soul shall shine forth in its full radiance. The blessed shall discover the treasures of sanctity contained in the hearts of great saints; they shall comprehend those heroic virtues which they practiced, and the labors which they undertook for the glory of God.

Angels and Men in Heaven.

Finally, in the heavenly country, human intelligence shall hold communication with angelic intelligence, and shall receive wonderful illuminations therefrom. The angels shall recapitulate for men the part they played in the government of the world; the struggle which they maintained against the powers of darkness; and the victories which they won. Angels and men shall live the same life; they shall glorify the same Father, and enjoy the same happiness.

There is no fear, therefore, that the intellect shall want for occupation in heaven or exercise for its activity. A very limited course of human science suffices to absorb the whole life of a scientist, and nevertheless the results thereby attained are of the scantiest.

In heaven, the entire universe, with its beautiful laws, its noble ordinances, its myriad and most varied beauties, shall be opened to the contemplation of man. Fortified by the light of glory, the human intellect shall understand without effort or fatigue. Its own nature shall not, however, be changed; it shall not understand everything at once or by a single effort; it shall pass from one knowledge to another, and consequently its acts shall be successive, with the exception of the act of the beatific vision. According to

his supernatural tastes and aptitudes, each one of the just shall devote himself to those intellectual occupations which shall most interest him.

The field for his activity shall no longer be confined to the creatures of our little world, but shall embrace the entire creation; renewed and embellished with added perfections, it shall offer, not only the history of our terrestrial revolutions, but all the changes, all the revolutions of the external world.

We shall enjoy beauty under all its forms; artistic beauty—the product of master minds, moral beauty—which confers upon the human mind an excellence whereof one can form no idea here on earth,—all shall be offered to the contemplation and admiration of the glorified intellect.

It requires but little intelligence then to perceive that there need be no fear of wearisome monotony in heaven. On the contrary, there shall be an activity greater than that which we know here below.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Stability and Eternity of Heavenly Happiness.

The happiness of heaven shall be an immutable and eternal happiness. It shall, therefore, put an end to the changes and fluctuations of a heart forever in pursuit of new and greater joys than those already possessed.

Each one knows by personal experience the extreme fickleness of the human heart, which, through time and circumstances, modifies or completely changes its affections. The young man smiles at the toys which amuse the child. The pleasures of youth in their turn, the external activity, the keen interest in races or athletic games, the poetry of the heart breaking in perpetual song upon the lips, lose their attraction for the man of mature years.

He wants something more substantial, success in his enterprises, honors, distinctions, in fine a more important and a more comfortable place at the banquet of existence.

Thus does the human heart pass through life, gathering here and there some drops of honey by the way, which constitute its happiness.

Since it cannot enjoy at one and the same time the innocent pleasures of childhood, the enthusiasm of youth, and the more serious gratifications of riper years, it changes and must change. Such is its nature.

The continuity of the same pleasure wearies man, impressions reiterated quickly change pleasure into discontent. Smiling or picturesque landscapes soon lose their charm for his eye; the melodies which once stirred his soul to its depths, too often repeated, grow tedious to his ear and jarring to his nerves. He cannot attach himself to any pleasure or find permanence in any joy.

As the sun of summer quickly absorbs the dew of morning, so does the ardor of his desires speedily exhaust itself. Thus the heart of man is forever in quest of new joys and sensations which he has not before experienced. He seeks them in distant journeys, in adventures, in whatever seems to gratify the craving for emotion which torments him. For a time, picturesque or varied sights, interesting journeys, and even dangers, fix his attention, cause his heart to beat and his nerves to thrill.

But here, again, satiety, inexorable weariness, looms up upon the horizon. Lassitude threatens to cast its veil of melancholy over the soul, which is tired of everything, and man is at a loss for some contrivance for sat-

isfying those desires, which, forever gratified, are forever springing up anew. It is the old story of King Solomon, who, having drained human happiness to the dregs, declared himself deceived and disenchanted.

“Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity.”

That is the end of human effort in pursuit of happiness. Does this mean that the fortunate ones of earth never experience any of that happiness which they so eagerly crave? By no means; on the contrary they enjoy its intoxicating sweetness longer than the rest, but, once having exhausted it, they demand something new and cannot find it. Hence their disappointment and discontent.

It is a striking proof of the innate greatness of the human heart and of the utter worthlessness of earthly things. Despite their variety and their attractiveness, they cannot succeed in contenting it for long. They give what is theirs of happiness, some drops of water, as it were, thrown upon a raging fire. If they satisfy the heart for a few moments, the furnace of its desires presently burns up with a new and inextinguishable intensity.

Happy the man who finally turns his heart towards the heavenly country, inexhaustible source of infinite good. There he shall, at last, be fully satisfied. There he shall find variety in joy and continuity in happiness.

The fairest dreams of the imagination shall there be realized; the heart shall pass from one joy to another, without ever having to dread satiety or disappointment. The riches placed at his disposal shall be as inexhaustible as God himself, who is their source.

Instability of the Affections.

The same instability is found in those more intimate affections, in which friendship, and social and domestic relations consist. Inconstancy, the natural infirmity of man, does much in many cases to lessen the strength of those ties of friendship which are, nevertheless, so sweet and so consoling. Caprice, fancy, the passions ever in ebullition, gradually relax the closest bonds, and sometimes put into antagonism, hearts which were seemingly destined to beat forever in union.

What is the use of complaining? Why those bitter words, when human affection has been proved a failure? So many causes have, so to say, changed the heart in its own despite: A prolonged absence, a change of humor or of taste, brought about by circumstances, the course of years, the inability of even the richest heart to give all that is demanded of it, the hope of finding in new surroundings the charm which has fled from the old,—who can say what they are, these thousand and one different influences which act

upon the heart and impel it to seek a new happiness, even as the heliotrope flower turns ever towards a new sun.

Needless to say, that these illusions are most frequently, alas, of short duration, and we presently regret the old friends sacrificed to the whim of a moment. But, in its affections as in its tastes, the heart changes because it seeks to escape, if possible, the monotony of happiness which has grown familiar, and to enjoy the gratification of loving and being loved after a new fashion and to a greater degree.

Instability of the Will.

To these natural, intrinsic causes of change, must be added others which are extrinsic, and which often compel us to modify our will or our desires.

We send these desires searching in all directions for whatever seems likely to satisfy them. They set out eagerly, they come upon the scent, they are about to seize upon some alluring object, when suddenly the law bars the way. It addresses itself with austere voice to the reason: "No, go not thither; you are in pursuit of a false joy; . . . your desires have made you the sport of an illusion; they are contrary to the commands of your Father and your good master. Stop!"

Man hesitates between reason, which says No, and the heart, which, with all its strength, says Yes. Too often, alas, the heart prevails. He follows, at all hazards, the voice of passion, which invites him to seize upon the present enjoyment, without thinking of the consequences; he changes and turns order into disorder, fidelity into disobedience.

But, the heat of passion passed, conscience resumes her rights and speaks with accusing voice. Then the instability of our nature, after having been fatal to us in causing us to sin, becomes once more propitious in permitting us to repent. The soul resumes possession of itself, changes once more, but this time to bring it humble and repentant under its Father's yoke.

So Passes Life.

Changeful and restless, the soul unceasingly alternates between good and evil, resembling a ship without a rudder, exposed to contrary winds upon an open sea, until, tired at last of fruitless efforts, "it casts its anchor on high," to use the expression of a well known writer, and attaches itself to God alone and to the joys of His heaven.

Man has then found the secret of happiness and of stability in love. Faithful to the teachings of St. Augustine, he has withdrawn his heart from the whirl of earthly joys, to

concentrate his desires in unity; and has risen above human changes and vicissitudes, to attach himself to the eternal goods. He is smitten with unity and eternity,—*divine amatores simces unitatis et æternitatis*.

And the storms come to an end and there is calm in the soul. Through faith and hope, man is already immersed in that ocean of peace and happiness, which is called God, awaiting the day when he shall come into possession of infinite and immutable goods. "*Inquietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in te.*"

Immutability in Heaven.

In heaven, the soul shall no longer change, because it no longer shall have any reason for changing. Having become once more mistress of itself and of its desires, it shall maintain them in harmony and exercise them in order.

In heaven, friendship shall be lasting. The heart, enlarged in its power of loving, shall contract new alliances, without being compelled to abandon the old. It shall increase the number of its friends, whilst preserving the same friendship for each.

In heaven, above all, man shall preserve immutable the supreme affection, cause of all others. He shall always and with his whole heart love his God, his benefactor, his Father.

He shall love Him and be by Him beloved. The sweet assurance shall be his that the love of God shall be immutable, and that it shall never change in his regard, No, never, never!

“The very fear of such a misfortune would fill the souls of the blessed with bitterness. But, loved by Him, they shall not be haunted by the fear that His love might grow cold. No, never, never, never, shall His divine beauty lose its ineffable attraction, the power to make them happy; and, consequently, their happiness shall never be either obscured or lessened.” (Happiness of Heaven, p. 327.)

The Eternity of Happiness.

The terrible enemy which ever threatens our happiness, and finally destroys it, death, shall be excluded from heaven. We have the words of God Himself as our guarantee:

“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow, shall be any more, for the former things are passed away.” (Apoc. xxi, 4.)

Yes, in truth, “the former things are passed away:” Poverty, toil, the vicissitudes of time, temptations, all these things are passed beyond recall. The children of God have entered into their inheritance, which shall never be taken from them, because

“death shall be no more.” Never, again, shall they behold fathers and mothers bidding a long and sad farewell to heart-broken children, for “death shall be no more.” Nor shall they be compelled to see their loved ones moving slowly downwards to the grave and disappearing at last from yearning eyes. They shall hear no more the cold and heavy earth falling cruelly upon the mortal remains of beloved friends, for “death shall be no more.”

“Death is swallowed up in victory. O Grave, where is thy victory! O Death, where is thy sting!” (I. Cor. xv.)

Such is the joyful song of triumph perpetually resounding through the aisles of the holy city.

“The just shall live forevermore, and their reward is with the Lord; therefore shall they receive a kingdom of glory and a crown of beauty at the hand of the Lord.” (Wisdom v.)

The Exile Has Entered into His Country.

Man on this alien earth, wanders from city to city, from town to town, trying various occupations, forming transient connections, which he shall soon be called upon to abandon. He snatches a few hours from toil to seize upon some passing pleasure for his heart. But the uncertainty of things fills

him with ever present anxiety: May not a sudden catastrophe deprive him in an instant of the fruits of long years of labor?

At length, he has reached his native land; his fortune is made. Henceforth, all shall have rest,—body, mind, and heart. Henceforth he can possess his riches in peace, and enjoy at his leisure the affection of his family and friends. He is happy.

“O kingdom of glory,” cries St. Augustine, “abode of supreme felicity! Ah, if it but pleased God that, at this moment, having received the pardon of my sins, and being freed from the heavy burden of my flesh, I might fly upwards to that glorious country and enter into the joy and rest of my Lord.

“If it but pleased His goodness that I might be permitted to break the bonds which bind me, and go forth at this very instant from this valley of tears, to enter into the holy city, and into the palace resplendent with light; to receive from the hands of my God the immortal crown which I expect from His mercy; to be admitted into the company of the heavenly spirits of the saints, and to sing with them Thy praises forever; to contemplate the glory of Jesus Christ; to be enlightened with the infinite light of His glory, and to participate in His eternal and divine life.” (Meditations XXII.)

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Conclusion.

Such, then, is the happiness promised to man in the country of the blessed. His risen body shall enjoy privileges which shall constitute its glory. It shall be impassible and immortal; it shall possess agility and spirituality; it shall shine with admirable clearness. Each of its senses shall have enjoyments compatible with its nature; the eyes shall see the beauties of the new creation, the beauty of the dwellers in the heavenly country, the pomp and splendor of its festivals; the ear shall be charmed with the celestial harmonies; the other senses shall have their particular joys.

The heart of man shall enjoy a special sweetness in the society of the saints and angels; it shall find once again the relatives and friends with whom it shall resume the happy relations of other days.

In fine, a vast and magnificent field shall be provided for the exercise of intellectual activity. Truth, beauty, and goodness, shall display themselves in their full radiance. Happiness shall reign supreme throughout

the kingdom of the Father of the family, and that happiness shall be immutable and eternal. Yes, the saints in heaven shall be truly blessed. But, as the sons of a family, surrounded by enjoyments which the paternal wealth has procured for them, remember the price which was paid for their happiness, so shall the elect in heaven be ever mindful that their beatitude is from God, and that all should be referred to Him, and they shall sing forever the heart's canticle of love and gratitude.

Where Jesus Finds His Saints.

This happiness of heaven is offered to every man who has come into the world; no class of society is excluded from it. The rich, the mightiest of kings, like St. Louis, St. Edward, St. Henry, St. Stephen of Hungary, and many other great and learned personages, have gained it by the heroism of their virtues. But we know, since the sermon on the mountain, that the Saviour chooses His elect by preference from amongst the poor, the toilers, and those who suffer upon earth, too often despised by the great of this world. They shall form the immense majority of the saints.

This is a great consolation for us in our pains and miseries; a great hope which induces us to accept with resignation our very

modest share in the goods of earth. One day the goods of heaven shall compensate us a hundredfold.

In most cases, the way is very steep which leads from earth to heaven,—very rough and painful, the road which ends in happiness. But let us always remember that Jesus has chosen it for himself and for his own. He worked as a mechanic; he was poor; he held aloof from the world, and from its life of pleasure. This is the way of the cross, which shall surely bring us to glory and happiness.

So sure is that way that thousands and millions of men, who were not compelled thereto by necessity, have entered upon it voluntarily. They have embraced the religious life, a life of suffering and poverty, of self-sacrifice and labor, a life detached from the world, but also a life of merit which makes salvation easy.

Courage, then, and confidence! Let us walk along that path in company with Jesus and Mary. "Let us follow our shepherd and be ready for the reward." Soon we shall see with our eyes what was shown to Esdras, in his great prophetic vision:

"And I, Esdras, I saw on the mountain of Zion, a great multitude, which no man could number.

"And all were singing a hymn of praise to the Lord.

“And in their midst stood a young man of great stature, who towered above all the rest. To each he distributed crowns.

“And I questioned the angel, and said, Lord, who are these? And he answered me :

“They are those who have put off mortality, to clothe themselves with immortal glory. They have confessed the name of God. They are crowned ; they have received the palm of victory.

“And I said to the angel, Who is he that distributes crowns to them and puts palms into their hands ?

“And the angel said to me : He is the Son of God, to whom they have given testimony in the world.

“And I glorify those who have fought bravely for the Lord.”

Gratitude and Love.

In concluding these considerations upon the Life Beyond the Grave, and on the happiness of heaven, what remains for us to do, if not to prostrate ourselves at the feet of Him, who shall be the cause of this happiness, and tell Him of our gratitude and love.

Yes, love and gratitude to God, who shows Himself so magnificent in the inheritance He reserves for His children ; gratitude and love to the Father, so full of mercy towards all the sons of guilty Adam ; gratitude and love to

the Saviour, who, after having pardoned us so many sins, bestows upon us so many goods, and shall crown our happiness by giving Himself to His children.

What remains for us to do, if not to find consolation for the miseries of the present in the hope of days to come, and encouragement to persevere in the love of God and in fidelity to his service, that we may one day have the happiness of seeing, possessing, and loving Him eternally.

Let us often go in spirit to visit our parents and friends in the heavenly country, where, thenceforth, secure of their own happiness, they pray for us, and await us in the eternal meeting-place.

Let us often think of the immense fortune which we are amassing by our good works and by our fidelity to the law of God.

Let us often turn our hearts to the contemplation of the joys reserved for them in heaven, so that we may thus give them courage to suffer with patience.

“I am not rich on earth, but shall be in heaven. I have few pleasures in the present life, but I shall be filled to overflowing with happiness in the life to come. A few years more of toil, and the day of great rest and of the great reward shall dawn, when my ravished ears shall hear my Saviour inviting me into the eternal joy:—Come, ye blessed of

my Father, possess the kingdom which I have prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

“Exile of earth, enter into your country!

“Thou, who wert poor amongst men, thou, who didst suffer upon earth in body and soul, but who didst remain faithful to my love, take thy place now amongst my family to be eternally blessed.”

